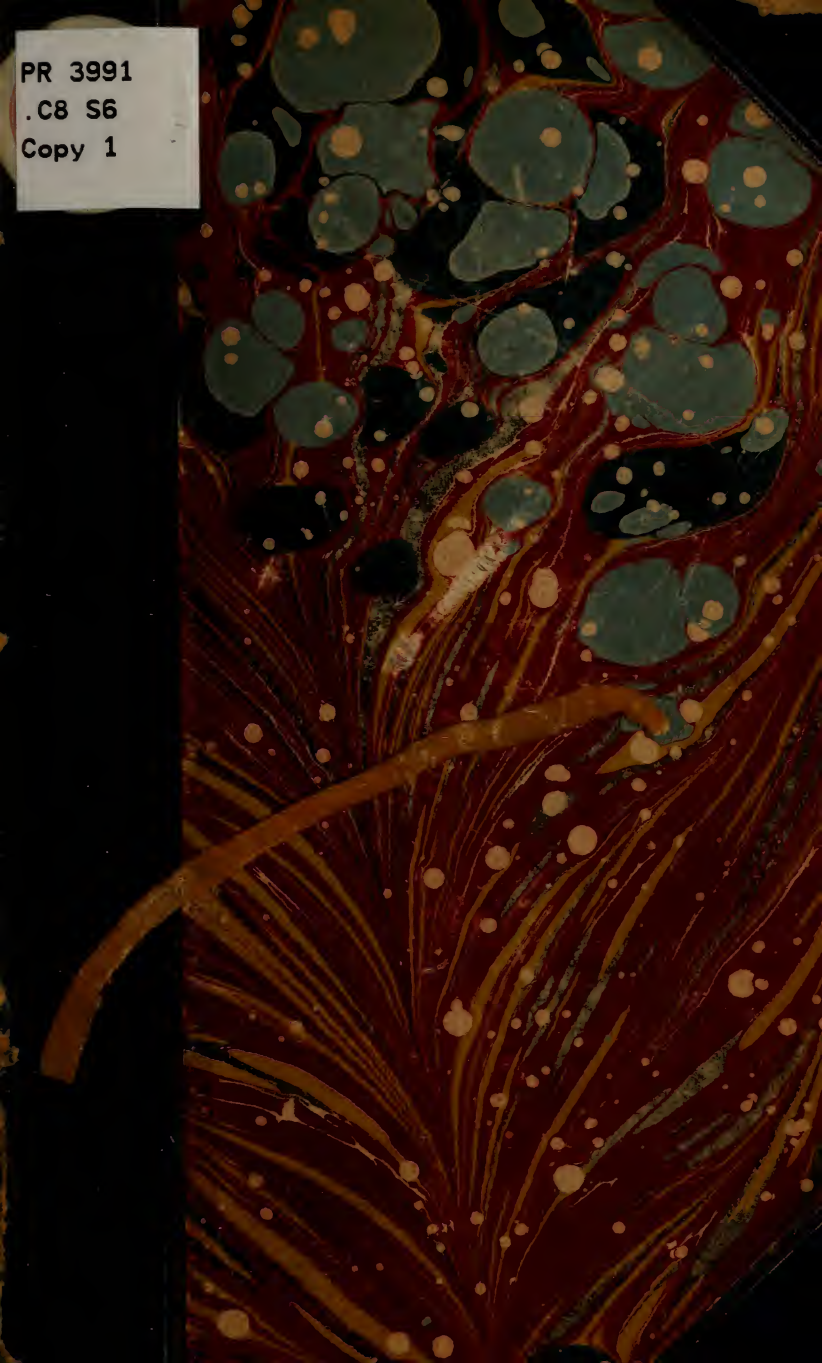


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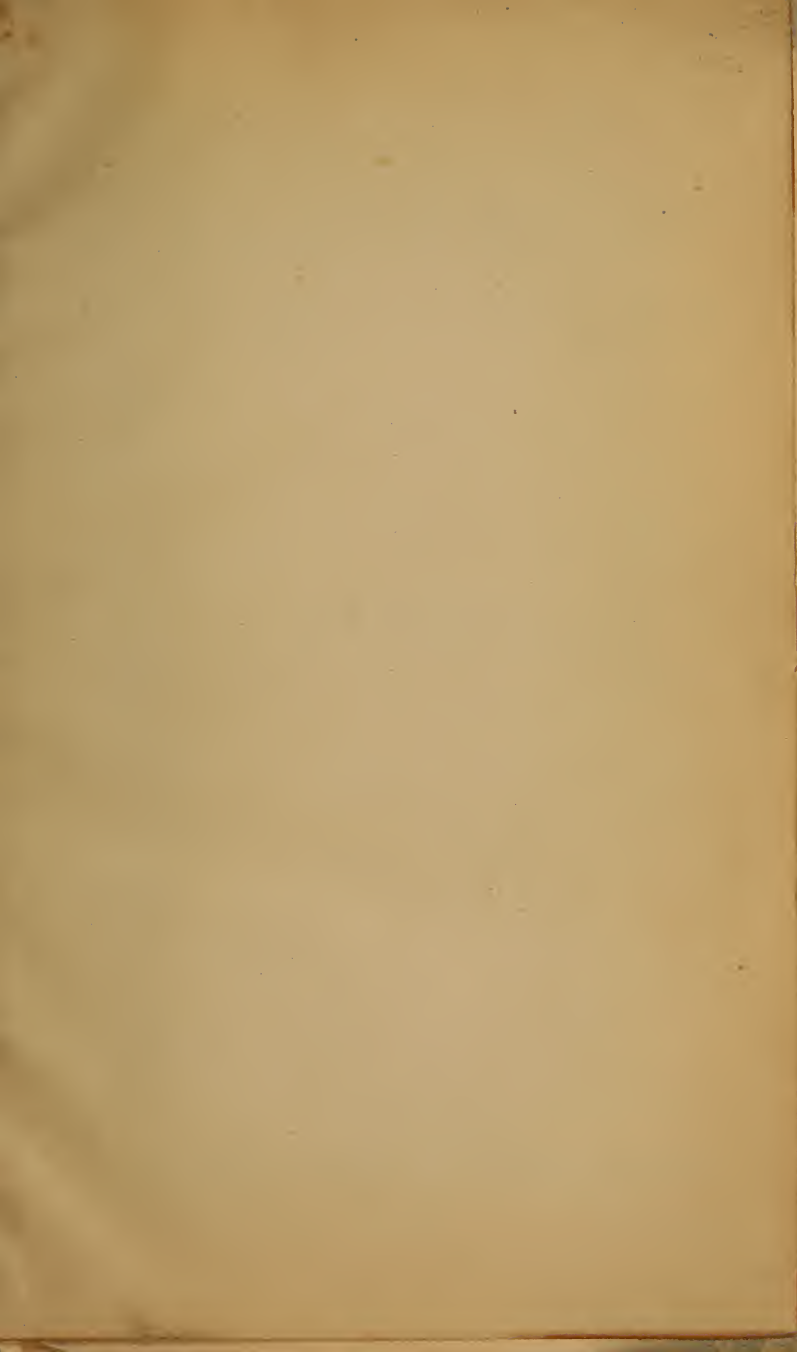


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CONTENTS.

| | Page |
|----------------------------------|------|
| THE NEWSPAPER | 1 |
| THE LITERARY BORE | 4 |
| THE CODGER | 9 |
| THE INJURED INDIVIDUAL | 14 |
| THE WISEACRE | 21 |
| THE HUMBUG | 24 |
| THE GREAT AUCTIONEER | 30 |
| MANNERISM | 45 |
| THE DISAPPOINTED MAN | 55 |
| THE SANGUINE MAN | 62 |
| THE CAUTIOUS MAN | 67 |
| THE GENTEEL MAN | 73 |
| THE DANDY | 77 |
| THE BLIND FIDDLER | 79 |
| FALSE ESTIMATES | 87 |
| SENSIBILITY | 96 |
| LIVELINESS | 105 |

| | Page |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| ENTHUSIASM | 109 |
| DISAGREEABLE PEOPLE | 114 |
| JOB'S COMFORTERS | 123 |
| PARTICULAR PEOPLE | 128 |
| THE WIGGINS'S MUSICAL PARTY | 131 |
| OSTENTATION | 152 |
| CONCEITED PEOPLE | 155 |
| THE LORD MAYOR'S DINNER | 161 |

SKETCHES.

THE NEWSPAPER.

9
DELINEATE who can (Lord Ogilby himself need not spurn the office) the great luxury of a Newspaper at the breakfast-table, moist and steaming from the press,—the concomitant mental repast, served not in *entrées*, but in bulk, and redeeming even the vulgarity of “battered rolls in the middle of July.”

Yet has it its alloys. Of which, is it not one to detect in the theatrical advertisements an apology for the non-appearance that evening of a favourite actor, or substitution in the programme of an old for *the* new play in consequence of unforeseen circumstances,—you having secured a box or “places,” and effected other needful arrangements to witness such performance, in company with your cousins from the

Land's End, whose sojourn with you terminates to-morrow? Or, to learn from the Gazette the insolvency of a friend whom you had recently accommodated with a loan, to be repaid punctually in three months? Or, from the list of fashionable movements, the sudden exit for the Continent of the identical grandee, before whom, for a consideration, you were about to prostrate yourself in the sanguine attitude of a suitor? Or, to read in the police columns the exposure of a near relative for assaults upon door-knockers, bell-handles, mendicants, and cripples, or for other youthful incoherencies, and finally setting at nought the nocturnal authorities in accents too forcible to be endured or quoted, even to "his worship?" Or, in the law report, that another and respected kinsman had been called to figure in a witness-box, and there, overawed by the novelty of his situation, and the suavity of his learned inquisitor, had committed himself by a *lapsus* that had caused a titter through the court, and amused even his Ludship? Or, to find in the "literary" column a review of the new work for whose success you felt a "slight interest," replete with sarcasm and contempt for the author's powers and presumption, couched in all the pungency of expression, which, though equally available on either side of a question, nevertheless does either way influ-

ence the judgment of the most courteous reader? Or, on referring to a leading article, from which you thirst for enlightenment on the all-important subject, to find assertion in place of argument, and in lieu of the threatened dissection, or an attempted one, of the fallacies of an opponent, only a vilification of person or persons unknown and by you uncared for, from whom the fallacies may have emanated? Or, from the births, &c., to gather that your esteemed but unprosperous friend who perpetrated a love-match in his zenith of youthful intrepidity has been presented with another reinforcement to his hungry battalion? It is not always with equanimity that we con the marriages ("another star gone out!")—But, worst of all, is the furtive glance at the daily list of departures from this mortal scene, in which occasionally we recognise a familiar name.

THE LITERARY BORE.

THE poor relation who persists in the practice of dropping in without notice may be evaded. So may the leisurely dog over the moors, who, when asked to come and spend a long day, has the conscience to arrive with his fishing-tackle at your door before the servants are up or the watchman is off his beat. So may the astronomer, who decoys you into his garden on a sharp night to peep with him at the vault of heaven through a telescope woefully out of repair : a delicate chest or susceptibility to cold, if he have a heart in his bosom, shall be your ample apology for retreat. Even Il Fanatico is not so bad : to an unmusical victim the trial may be painful, but if you have *any* soul for harmony, the names of Handel, Beethoven, and Mozart, must have *some* attraction in your ears ; and if the expositor's initiation have been in the right school, depend on it he has something curious for you, *outré* as may appear his fashion of illustration. And there are the invul-

nerables, who force their acquaintance whether you would or no, who positively won't take a cut. And your morning visitor, who assures you he doesn't want any refreshment, and yet won't go. All these may be endured; but the Literary Bore! where is his counterpart? He brings no commentaries on the productions of the great departed: classic names prevail not with *him*: his theme is from his own poor muse. He is not to be put off with an indignity, for he has earned his right of consultation by frequent and liberal hospitality. He is not to be evaded, for he pounces on you in a *tête-à-tête*, immediately after dinner, or when you are stretching your weary limbs upon his sofa, pat with his poem or tragedy, or part of a treatise he has written, to show something or other that exists in his imagination. You cannot make common cause and distribute him among your circle: he lays hold on you when no one's near to help, or share your sufferings; he lies in ambush for you, and never precipitates his operations until he is safe of his opportunity. He begins thus: "By the bye, a little thing I've been doing." You know what is coming; he goes to his desk, turns quickly round to ask if he bores you; you long to say 'yes,' but have not the heart. The *trifle* is produced amidst a heap of papers huge enough for

the elements of a new lexicon. He turns them about, alights on a passage which he begins mumbling to himself, reads aloud, but stops, breathless, from downright excitement, "No, it is not there." He thumbs the poor leaves again, controlling his emotions as he best can, launches anew, and gets through half-a-dozen lines or so without a break. But here you very naturally laugh,—which he sees ; you are alarmed. He asserts that he was prepared for your opposition on *that* point and in that stage of the argument : this relieves you. He proceeds ; but the humour of the spectacle and the idea of his mistaking your smile for a controversial one, tickle you again, which observing, he *assures* you, you are wrong, as you shall now see as he advances into the pith of the subject. You groan inwardly ; and so on to the end of his inexorable chapter. Is he poet ? Hear him steam through a section of genuine home-spun, breathing fierce disdains, gratuitous denials, and horrid confession as though the man were possessed. He is now to work upon your feelings : cadences of wire-wove imagery, chirpings of false joy, hiccups of tenderness, and undulations of pathos, flow from his quivering lips with parental yet rhetorical intensity. 'All this for Hecuba !' you cry to yourself, oppressed with the length of his rhapsody—which, however, he

now brings to a close, and from over-exertion is unable to speak. He awaits your criticism: you hesitate; he implores you to be candid. The whole torrent of his effusions has passed through your aural, like gruel through a sieve, and you are dumb. How you congratulate yourself the next time he confronts you, that it is not under his roof, nor in the vicinity of his sanctum. Stay awhile,—his hind pocket looks bulky; it carries six sheets of foolscap, instruments of torture, wherewith to reopen upon you at will; or he sends you an MS. (as he calls it) for your perusal, when your first dream shall be of your tormentor, ere you are a tithe-part prepared for the interview, for you procrastinated the irksome duty, but are at length shamed into action by examples from without and from within, and delicacy and benevolence conspire to make you an agreeable hypocrite. Meet him in the Park, he has a pain, and must sit down among the hypochondriacs and nursery-maids—the Muse again! Or walk home with him from the *Conversazione*, and though he pause not at every lamp-post to regale you with an Ode to Darkness or an Invocation to the Moon, yet he has a *memory*, stocked for all occasions, from the which, you holding the umbrella, he pours his inarticulate numbers through the coils of his neck-wrapper, spouting as

he goes for want of thought. Oh, for the patience of a select circle that can make a pastime of monotony, or for the humility of Sir Benjamin Backbite, who, goaded for a copious taste of his quality, could limit himself to the modest complement of a stanza ! And why, too, persecute *you* in particular ? Alack ! he is no such exclusive : he spares none, or would not ; enemy or kinsman, near or distant friend, subaltern or debtor, all have had their turn ; he has *no* mercy : the furor almost knows no preferences. Audience he must have ; and in default of a worthier, he will befool Bottle-nose into a Mæcenas, and treat him to an *ore rotundo* in the little parlour, with anything else he would like to mix with it. And there's the plastic barber (a critic too) makes of him a friend for life, thereby getting purchasers for his creams and cheap education for his children, all by the courteous tact of seeming interested, as he sits on his stool resuscitating the lustre of an old peruke, while the Literary Bore reads to him his *chef-d'œuvre*.

THE CODGER.

HE is hard upon sixty—wears gaiters, and an unfashionable costume altogether—*ought* to wear powder and a pig-tail—is neither tall nor short, but high-shouldered—has a good phrenological head—complexion drab—no whiskers—quick eyes—pug-nose—and a Punchinello mouth, concave from loss of teeth, but genial as Mr. Wilberforce's. He belongs to no club, but has his favoured haunts, where he can depend on his company, and knows he is not misinterpreted. He seldom dines out—to him synonymous with *out of his element*. He is a bachelor; makes no noise in the world, nor in the parish, and submits to any penalty to exonerate himself from official responsibility. He never has a dispute,—a serious one, with anybody; he can maintain his point, and prove all that he asserts, but he neither rushes in “where angels fear to tread,” nor is he quite so formal a moralist as to “quarrel with a straw,” though reputation were somewhat involved in the issue. He has his line of

politics—at least you know which newspaper to hand him when you have reached two and he has the choice—but he does not penetrate the depths, or enter into the controversies; he heeds the state of agriculture, and the tides, the births, &c., skims the “*Omniana*,” evades the Police and the dismal suicides and accidents, goes through the Fashion if it is not too long, does not altogether neglect the commercial intelligence, once in a week may read a leading article through—and then he begins his dinner. Thrice happy, he never grumbles—and, if there were no other advantage in this peculiarity, it saves him time, and gets him his aliment while it’s hot. He takes his quantum of “stout,” refuses nothing from fear of consequences, falls then to his port, or his toddy, as the case may be. He wants no propitiation from without, no incitements beyond his native *bonhomie*, to chime and harmonise, to listen or applaud; and yet there’s a rough-hewn caste and crudity, though tempered with courtesy, about the creature, which should scarcely heighten the *charm* of his eccentricity; but he presents to your observant eye the spectacle of a *codger*, realizing all the pleasant fiction that author, actor, or *pictor* must each fail in delineating—that embodiment of quaint amenity, striking but unaffected, cheerful but sober, independent in charac-

ter, but catholic in spirit, intelligent but not factious, grotesque but respectable—the Codger! If you don't look at him *as a codger* you will do him wrong, seeing nothing in him but a mere fogey—in all probability a grandfather, a cribbage-player, not impossibly a teetotaler, a miller, or a wag—perhaps a cockney, an auctioneer—certainly not a schoolmaster, nor a clergyman, nor a sportsman. But, be apprised beforehand that he is a true and unfeigned Codger—seize the hint, grasp the idea, and “perpend.” Watch him—he is the very incarnation of an ideal; there is palpableness about him that transcends the impunity of fire-light and makes darkness visible like a rabbit on the wall. His head is grey, but cropt like Mungo's. Friendly, gladsome chap—though, by the bye, he will chicane a bit when his right is in jeopardy for his *favourite corner*, where either he must sit or not sit at all—his factitious domicile, his *locus sigilli* where no *locum tenens* were endurable, and where alone perhaps his soul palpitates within him. Here he “comes out,” in his simplicity, and through disavowals, and coy deprecation, and mock assumptions of dignity, with some playful dogmatism, he entertains you, with a fluency which nothing, not deglutition, can impede, with that rarity in these days, the confessions of a genuine mind. Him you *may* believe, and however

Mr. Buckram might turn the nose and mistake him for a butt, you may receive all that issues from his lips as so much truth—as far as sincerity can make it such—and therefore, if you be equal to your opportunity, as so much wisdom,—for he tells how he can cry “fig” to a witch, how he concedes to imperious conscience, how he’s a stranger to excess (and therefore not a teetotaler), a fisher out and rewarder of merit, an avoider of vestries, and literary societies, and black silk stockings; but shows also how he’s an oddity and looks like a genius, and how he has survived the season of impetuosity, when, like you, he took oath, and aspired, and fell in love, and was therein somehow disappointed, and then Fate hooked him by the gullet, and he found himself at a new climacteric. But though decay has come upon him, he has fallen into a second bloom, and in exchange for the devil of the boy he rejoices in the benignity of the Codger. He has learned to restrain himself, to deny himself, to yield to the boisterous and give them rope enough, to quell opposites with negatives, to tolerate,—and all with honour, for he has smoked the devil’s jerkin, and is not afraid of man. The fair know him scarcely but as the queer Mr. So-and-so, whom they have heard spoken of by the squire as a nondescript, by the parson (sad to say) as a non-

attendant, by the tradesman as a benefactor, and by the younger brother as a "Codger." He is never more than ceremonious in *their* company, and they have no certainty of seeing him but at an anniversary.

We have no means of guessing what he does with himself all day. He *must* sleep well, and so nothing should well come amiss to him. We are not going to pry into this. But can he be always a *Codger*? At breakfast and in his study, or in his poultry-yard? And how is he furthermore endowed? Does he feel a musical truth? That he does. But, for the heroics—does Virtue recognise him here—does Slander rouse—does he writhe at injustice—can he weep with the seraphim—or does he "lack gall to make oppression bitter?" And how does he feel at sight of an undertaker?—But, this is beside our graphic province; we would not dissect him, nor trace him into such privacies, for fear of divesting our dear imaginary friend of what we proclaim as his seeming veritable characteristics—a perpetual sense of enjoyment—chaste but convivial—a chuckling glow, a blithe and garrulous honesty, a boundless philanthropy, a whimsical modesty,—and, in fact, an individuality indescribable, and peculiar to *none* but THE CODGER.

THE INJURED INDIVIDUAL.

IF ever a man had a right to be a fatalist, it is the "Injured Individual." "If I had been bred a hatter," said one to us once, "I verily believe people would have been born without heads"—an extravagant hypothesis apparently, but not so irrational when we contemplate the man, and hear him recount his wondrous grievances! We hear much about the equal distribution of happiness, of the virtual equality supposed to pervade the various conditions of life, of the inward satisfaction attendant upon virtuous action independently of its results, the pride of fortitude, the supports of conscience in adversity, the elasticity of hope, and the mystical pleasures of poverty; and, although we do not profess profundity enough to refute the doctrine that good and evil are fairly apportioned to all men, we confess to some misgivings upon the truth of it, and are inclined to think Justice is, after all, but a one-sided or an impotent arbitress of our earthly destinies. We

insist that it is so in the case of the "Injured Individual." There is no compromise for *him*,—he casts his bread upon the waters, "and there an end"—a conspiracy of accidents is clearly demonstrable against *him*—"blind chance" is *not* blind whenever *his* fate is in the issue,—and, let the philosopher of Massachusetts advance what he may upon the law of universal compensation, here at least is an exception, if but a solitary one, to the working of his theory. Who has not met the Injured Individual?—the man of many wrongs—the scapegoat of treachery—the victim of the designing, the ungrateful, and the vicious,—the friend with legitimate long face and clouded brow, who comes to you ever with a new recital of his trials, and a fresh illustration from his own experience of the villany of mankind? Gallantly has he performed *his* part; exemplary the aptitude and assiduity displayed in all the enterprises in which he has been engaged; and yet, how the malice of man, and the decrees of unseen powers, have worked against him for evil! Not few, but countless, are the proofs his autobiography unfolds of his predestinated martyrdom through this life, and the unconditional postponement of all his little enjoyments to the brighter ages of the life to come. A very target for Fortune to "shoot her bolts at"—

his ill star ever glimmering upon him, like a dark lantern, to discover him to the malignant eye of his persecutors! This is no exaggeration. And the man is no illusion. There is "the lucky dog,"—and there is the "Injured Individual." The lottery of life has dealt him not only blanks, but forfeitures, pains, and penalties. Men and elements have combined against him. Frauds, disappointments, and the average ills of life are among the *minor* evils that have assailed him—Bankruptcies, and hurricanes, prosecutions, revolutions, and even earthquakes, help to swell the catalogue of fell agencies that have wreaked destruction on his guiltless head, and before which, after long and fierce struggling, he now "'gins to pale his ineffectual fire," and seek a refuge under the disconsolate title of "The Injured Individual."

Reader, extend your sympathies to this man. But be not deceived as to his identity. Be sure he is the veritable character he pretends to be, and not one of the million counterfeits abroad, imposing upon the credulous, and assuming to themselves the title and privileges belonging only to the *really* Injured Individual. Be careful not to be seduced by the whinings of the Insatiable, who would grasp *all*, and swear it is theirs, not in law only, but in equity—thirsty

souls, whose quick sensibilities *feel* the hard exaction of an act of benevolence "for the sake of appearances," and the *unkindness* of the needy, who impose on them the necessity of refusing under any circumstances to transgress the limits which the forms of ostentatious charity prescribe—with whom the rights of property are a code of morals, and a claim upon their friendship a depredation, and an "injury!" Listen not, either, to the groans of the dilapidated idler, who never would follow advice, nor receive it, and has lived to verify in his own history the trite predictions of nursery fables and the aphorisms of his writing-master touching the rewards of industry and the fruits of disobedience. Truth is seldom welcome where it condemns, and few men can bear the idea of having "injured" *themselves*, even by a *lapsus* or a venial indiscretion. Those notorious for having been "their own enemies" are apt to be imaginative on the subject of their grievances, and can relate, many of them, some heart-rending "injuries" which they have sustained through the operation of the common course of nature—very *desperadoes*, when sympathy is denied them. They proclaim themselves Injured Individuals! Nothing requires more patience to bear, or philosophy to profit by, than the process of expiation. Consequences are *incurred* without a

thought ; but to *bear* them often “ drives the soul to madness.” There *is* a sort of lunacy which makes people fancy themselves “ injured individuals ;” like the man with the “ turned head,” the imagination fled to for consolation befools them into monomania. How many of the self-constituted “ Injured Individuals ” must have passed through the Gazette ! What swarms must have recreated themselves in our prisons and houses of correction ! And, in the professions—how many startling geniuses, from being too proud to stoop, too vulgar to please, or too indolent to work, become ridiculous for their presumption, or wound themselves with the sword they are not skilled enough to wield against a foe,—and yet condole with themselves as “ Injured Individuals.” An ambitious man rushes into an uncongenial sphere, and is eclipsed by a more competent rival—he is thenceforward an Injured Individual. The flatterer, who entices with his fair words, when discovered to be a “ humbug,” and treated accordingly, can conscientiously declare himself an Injured Individual ! Nay, even the very Bully, who chances upon a wrong customer, through defect of that astuteness in selecting his victim which seldom does accompany brutality of mind, even *he* will dub himself an Injured Individual. Then there are those of the *dashing* school,

who are bold enough to run the risk of dreadful retribution for the chance of brilliant gain, and who, if the cast be against them, cannot endure the conditions entailed, and "strike" as soon as they are "put to their purgation." They, too, can call themselves Injured Individuals. The apple-woman in the street, who, scorning the admonitions of the police, invades the sanctity of the *pavé*, thereby "provoking Justice to break her *basket*" and scatter her provisions into the gutter, vows herself an Injured Individual! The husband who neglects his wife, because "no man can serve two *mistresses*," and is brought to atone for the dereliction by ignominy and disgrace, nominates himself an Injured Individual. The fool-hardy combatant, who *will* fight single-handed despite the entreaties of friends who know his weakness and the strength of his antagonist, and then gets worsted at a blow, has the poor consolation of fancying himself an Injured Individual. The sensualist, in the agonies of dyspepsia, pities himself into a frenzy and "jumps the life to come" out of his bed-room window—when his own testimony is not wanting to identify him, in one sense at least, as an Injured Individual. These and many others, such as the usurer who meets with losses, the gambler who "snaps his tether," the "crab" repudiated for

his acerbities, the ruffian expatriated to save his life, the spendthrift embarrassed, the aggressor repelled, the cheat exposed, the proser coughed down, the trickster entrapped, the coward degraded—all are in turns arrogators of the merit and immunities contended for in behalf of the Injured Individual. In fine, for the protection of our client, the *real* Injured Individual, and of his benefactors the public at large, we may assert that most of the fraternity who give themselves out for Injured Individuals are generally such as, directly by word or deed, or indirectly by example, are most open to the charge of doing injury to others. They are *damaged*, but not *Injured*, *Individuals*.

THE WISEACRE.

IF there is a happy man under the sun, it is the Wiseacre. Endowed by nature with that "mobility" which, though he be hard to satisfy, renders all things for him proportionately interesting and equally accessible, his range is so wide, there is scarcely a subject you can mention on which he will confess entire ignorance. He may betray it, but not purposely. He seems to say, 'Have done with your repetitions—principles and details, doctrines and histories, art and science, truth and falsehood, microcosm and macrocosm, all are familiar to *him*, but he has had so *much* of it ;'—and if the discussion must proceed, he cares only to listen, just setting you right now and then on a point too small to embroil him in the argument, to which he is sadly unequal. Presume not to moralize, or rhapsodize, or any way extemporize, for *his* edification—he has considered it all, and dismissed it from his mind, and your very profoundest or most eloquent emanations he greets with the *pish* !

peculiar to the Wiseacre. He is never surprised ! Crack of doom, nor of "chesnut in a farmer's fire," can startle *him*. Where simplicity traces only itself, or a dispensation of providence, he, gifted ! recognises a phase of mystery, a link of an invisible chain, or the truth of secret divination. Charge him not with impenetrability,—he will tell you 'tis the test of a philosopher never to be astonished at anything. And, in his self-reliance, what a vantage-ground has he ! Disdaining the prescription of humility as an early lesson of wisdom, his method was to overestimate himself, and from that elevation in a manner look disparagingly upon all things. He has a tutelary air, but imperious, and is scarcely to be bribed into an act of real condescension ; even flattery he tries to regard only as another's opinion of him, and he has no faith but in his own. The only thing he receives not invidiously is *facts*. He is no hypocrite—he believes himself all he would pass for. Though an acknowledged deceiver, he is an innocent one, for himself is his chiefest dupe ; a man, surely, that can brook derision all his life, and "still go on," must have the purity as well as the boldness of a martyr ; and, with the exception of a lurking curiosity to see the Thames on fire, the average taint of mischief is more than can fairly be laid to the account of

“the Wiseacre.” His habits are unimpeachable. Did he gamble, he would probably back his opinions with tremendous odds. But he does not. In politics he may be “anything.” He is great at a crisis, and probably could give valuable hints in high quarters at the present juncture, were it worth his while ; but, as we said, it is not easy to draw him out, unless, as is sometimes the case, he be a “hero-worshipper,” when, his political principle smacking more of a principle of fealty than a fidelity to principle, he sees his way clearer, and can defend the god of his idolatry from the aspersions of a “wag” with considerable sharpness. Yet he has his little abstractions, wherein, apart from such influences, he will hack at a truth or work a crotchet by the square ; and *has* been suspected of originality,—as when, for instance, he took the hint of widening a street from the falling of a tile upon the flags,—or, upon a higher scale, of promoting virtue, upon the homœopathy system, by the encouragement of vice. And, indeed, he has many anecdotes of his exploits of sagacity, still more striking, though unfortunately achieved under circumstances which preclude any authentication of them less partial than his own.

THE HUMBUG.

THE Humbug is a pettifogging compound of infidel, coward, and good fellow ; more or less of either, as the case may be ; but these are the components of the character. The title embraces a catalogue of delinquents, of all professions, not cognisable by the law of the land,—and a host of trivial philanthropists, that victimize their fellow-creatures, without intending them the slightest harm. There is the designing humbug, and the sanguine ; the one, a violator of the spirit, but a respecter of the letter, of the social law ; the other, a good-natured being, with a warm heart and no conscience, all impulse and no principle, without steadiness of judgment or of purpose, opinions, legitimate aims, or springs of action. Your genuine humbug is the *mean* character between these two, partaking of the venality of the one, and the imbecility of the other, a patchwork of guilt and innocence, a moral scarecrow — worth sketching for the benefit of the unwary.

He can adapt himself to any company—from a saint to a bailiff, an alderman to a teetotaller, a monk to a prig, a debtor to a creditor. With the saint he touches not upon spiritual matters, but softens his heart with a flattering unction, or one of his most ineffable bows; the bailiff he subdues with an air of sensitive dignity, which Cerebus himself could hardly withstand; the alderman he can beguile with pleasant prattle, through the successive courses of a luxurious banquet—and when that *strain* of harmony, “Non Nobis Domine,” has announced that the company have, one and all, gratified themselves to their appetites’ content, he in his turn can listen with greedy ear to his worship’s effusions of humour-some and magisterial wisdom; with the teetotaller he can inveigh with the emphasis of a fury against the liberal use of the article *spirits*, and the noun *intemperance*; the solitaire he heartens with ejaculations of admiration and envy at his conquest over *sense*; and the “prig” is allowed to be familiar, and vent his small “saws,” show his enamel, and cock his head, upon the simple condition of his paying the reckoning; the debtor he can frighten with an air of alarming firmness; and with the creditor, need we say, he invariably gains his point? His first impressions on a stranger are always favourable—dis-

ciplined in his manners, he is enabled, by the assiduity of self-interest, and the geniality of his better nature, to gain the ear, and, through that best of thoroughfares to reach the heart, and thence the pocket of a patron ; and although he should not long maintain his ground, his shameless flexibility of mind never forsakes him,—down and up again, *nil desperandum* is his motto, unsteadiness takes the name of buoyancy, vanity is gratified where prudence should be shocked, his wits are sharpened for the next encounter, and the excitement of novelty is his ample substitute for the credit of success.

If the humbug were not, as he is, a bettermost scamp, he might make a serviceable member of society ; and, but for his redeeming points, he would be a villain. As it is, he scruples not to desecrate the name of honour, and practise his wiles under the sacred pretext of friendship,—here he is an infidel ; sensibility makes him a coward, hence he is a “humbug.” He has not the boldness to disparage you to your face,—like a good fellow, he spares your feelings in your presence, and contents himself, when your back is turned, with an assault on your reputation. His actions and motives are mostly at variance, but both are changeful as the wind ; good and bad chasing each other, if not mingling together,

with rapid alternation ; weeper and cock-fighter ; sympathiser and tyrant ; flatterer and detractor ; nice companion and rancorous foe ; a bad son if he has no patrimony, but a good father — for he aspires to found a name.

He raises expectations which he knows, rather than feels, will not be realized. Go and ask a favour of him, and, though he cannot immediately comply, he will not damp you with a point-blank denial. He would like to do it, and can't ; but the credit of goodwill towards you does not satisfy him, without the reputation also of ability to serve you ; so he defers it, and keeps you hanging on his hook, sick at heart, and tortured with suspense, for his own present pleasure, and your imaginary profit. He leads you on by inuendo, exaggeration, and falsehood, involving you at every delay deeper into the mire of impending disappointment. He gladdens you to-day at the expense of your peace to-morrow and the six days, at least, that follow. He promises with a sincere wish, and perhaps some intention, to benefit you ; but the wish survives the intention, and is itself lost in his blazing incapacity to keep his word. Hence he is stigmatized as a treacherous friend, as hollow as a drum, a summer bird — a humbug ! Fearing no God, he fibs *ad libitum*, where he can do it with im-

punity ; and, you may observe, his most interesting adventures are always related to have transpired under circumstances which leave investigation useless and disproof impossible. Of a *fact*, advanced by the humbug, if it be at all of a startling nature, you may set down half, at least, as misrepresentation, if not the whole as fiction. He may well be an adept, for he serves an apprenticeship to the art of indiscriminate gulling. Does he not tell you how he read three volumes at a sitting, and forgot to wind up his watch ? or how he was awake with the sun after “ a rouse ” by moonlight, and, without the sedative of a wet napkin on his head, tackled to something particularly profound for four or five consecutive hours, and intends to do the same every day, whatever the sun may do, for four or five consecutive months yet to follow ? how he gave a setting down to a professed wit, sophist, or mountebank, now dead and gone, in the presence of one witness, also dead and gone ! Or, coming upon the stage of life, does he not give out that he has large expectations from his father, knowing that, as this is a delicate matter, no inquiries can be made till the old gentleman dies, and then, if the truth come out, he can fall back on the touching plea of disappointment ! and furthermore, how he for love, and not for money, conducted a knotty

business through a labyrinth of complexity, and, when the beneficaire had relinquished all hope of elucidation, brought it to a happy termination! What deeds of wonder he has performed by the force of constitutional facility,—how events have verified his intuitive predictions,—and how great authorities have come round to his views at the instigation of a greater, with whom he had been admitted to long and frequent conferences without prejudice to the Court Circular? Only mention the name of a distinguished individual, and he has no hesitation in telling you he knows him intimately, although he is not prepared to describe his person. Is “the black ox” on his hoof—is he down in the world? he pleads poverty to extenuate delinquency, and anything but truth in excuse for his poverty, ventures on the deep sea of shifts and contrivances, keeps his head above water without showing his face—a graduate for limbo—till he drifts upon a quicksand, or till he comes to be *forty*, and after that he is seldom to be traced, unless, as will sometimes happen, capricious Fortune cast the sheep’s eye at him, and make him a “gentleman,” when he marries a nondescript, and helps to people the isle with a race of hereditary HUMBUGS.

THE GREAT AUCTIONEER.

THERE are few places of public resort affording the gratuitous aids to reflection of which an idler is at liberty to avail himself at an *Auction-mart*. Whether at a scene of quiet entertainment or an emporium for the superabundant utilities of life, as a resting-place where nothing better offers for the jaded loungeur, or as "a centre of busy interests" for those who want to buy and those who want to sell, its attractions are of that multifarious character that I hardly know how an observer, indisposed for more serious occupation, can while away a spare hour to better advantage than by taking the range of these property-changers' rooms about three o'clock in the afternoon, when the attendance is good, and the hammers are all in full play. Candidates of all degrees, from the connoisseur in nicknacks to the expectant representative of a county, spectators with empty looks and empty pockets, who, were passports demanded at the door, could urge, some *ennui*, some

curiosity, as their only title to admission, and languid invalid-looking gentlemen, some in good clothes and some almost in tatters, are here thrown in promiscuous congregation together. As a physiognomist, where could he desire more genuine or more varied materials for speculation? And here, too, may he philosophise on the acquisitive propensities of humanity, tracing among the countless springs from which flow the joys of possession, the estimation of a bauble enhanced by the deterioration of age, the glitter of novelty supplanted by the charm of antiquity, the ambition of display, the strange passion for the unique, the electric spell of a bargain, and the wanton sport of competing with a rival bidder; and then heave a sigh for the transitory nature of those joys, and the precarious tenure by which the comely and costly things of this life are held, even by those who can afford to give the topmost price for them!

But, apart from the general seductions of the place, there is something engaging in the forms and functions appertaining to the ministerial character of the auctioneer himself; there is an idiosyncrasy in the man, discriminating him from the "lay humanities" around him, investing him with an aspect invitatory of criticism, though not, as with other dignitaries, inspiring the reverence which lays criticism under

restraint, conspicuous without being commanding—privileged, authoritative, oracular, and yet after all a familiar creature and *only an auctioneer*,—which pre-eminently distinguishes this class of practitioners from all others, and strikingly impresses them with the stamp of individuality. May I be permitted to suggest that to the fraternity of auctioneers the full meed of justice has not been rendered by the world? We read of celebrated statesmen, and warriors, eccentric physicians, inimitable barristers and actors, astounding financiers, inspired poets, and still more inspired preachers, and have been made to learn from authentic sources the peculiarities of their genius, the practical arts that assisted its display, and the whole history of their lives and conversation,—but we have no gallery of *Auctioneers*. On the score of pecuniary encouragement they have no cause to murmur, but renown and posthumous honour is cruelly denied them; they may be favourites of fortune, but to fame, in the exalted acceptation of the word, they are but heirs and strangers. For when does the obituary ever record in more than formal phraseology, the lamented departure from the scene of his triumphs of Mr. So-and-so, “the celebrated auctioneer?” What poesy was ever penned in commemoration of his defunct virtues of handsomer dimensions than

those of a common epitaph? The gossip of the tapis never admits him to the honour of a rumour, or even of a libel,—so that, despite his many and undeniable accomplishments, he must, under the usages against which in his behalf I would fain remonstrate, be content to marry, sin, and die in comparative obscurity, for his greatness is limited to the circle of his craft, and the four walls of the auction-room.

But there are exceptions to every rule. At the head of the list of auctioneers of the present day stands a gentleman of such high endowments and unquestionable superiority in his vocation, that I hardly dare presume to attempt his portraiture. He is a grand remove above the general caste of his order. In his person is concentrated all the aristocracy of his calling. He is in the Auction-mart what Rothschild used to be on 'Change, or what Daniel Lambert would have been at Guildhall had he been a member of the City Corporation, a triton among the minnows, a perfect leviathan, or, as the geologists would have it, a perfect iguanodon; he stands alone—not only in the box, but in the eye of the world, and of his pigmy brethren of the hammer. The appearance of this gentleman in public is heralded by the advertisement for several successive days in the principal newspapers of a programme of

his approaching sales, which presents as fair a specimen as pen could supply of the plausible and alluring powers, by the exercise of which his great professional eminence had been achieved. These effusions are unlike anything which ancient or modern literature affords, or rather, they combine the perfections of both, and in the mixture of perspicuity, luxuriance, and refinement, which pervade them, as compositions they may be said to be without a parallel. He has the happy faculty of investing a genteel residence with supernatural enchantments, and of transporting his readers, all in the way of business, into the regions of fairy-land where splendour and beauty strive for the mastery. And he does it without drawing on invention for a fact, or presuming to enter one item in his catalogue, which an inspection of the estate does not fully justify. His efforts are wrought by the sheer art of *colouring*. Where an ordinary auctioneer would give a description of a site, he will give a *history* of a site, and garnish it with a train of pleasing and romantic associations. He exhausts the pictorial beauties of his scene, and "then imagines new." The vegetable world he endues with spirituality, and will give the ivy credit for ingenuity, as well as devotion to the domain that cherishes it, in the grace and order with which it

entwines itself around the walls. Rocks he inspires with symmetry, and embryo chalybeates are incubated by his magic touch. Pomp and retirement are offered in equal perfection ; here the tournaments of ancient days might be transcended, and yet Zimmerman have found inspiration for his muse. The thought that suggests itself to the mind on perusing these things is, how *can* the man knock down so many paradises ! Is he a destroying angel in disguise ? Or is it "Cain's jawbone" he wieldeth in his left hand, miscalling it a hammer ?

On the day appointed, and within five or ten minutes after the hour fixed for business, he is announced by the ringing of a bell, and a cluster of eager-looking persons in the lobby are seen wending towards the auction-room, headed by a tall hale-looking man, about sixty years of age, walking as though he were rather stiff in the joints, holding some papers in his hand, and talking (without looking at any one as he moves) in a loud nasal tone and peremptory manner. He ascends the rostrum, and takes his seat, where he is seen more at leisure. On the occasion when I had the pleasure of seeing him, he was dressed in a pea-green frock-coat and velvet-collar, white trousers and shoes, a buff waistcoat, and a bright-blue stock, surmounted by an ample

pair of gills, and a physiognomy to which only M. Claudet, when the sun, as the auctioneer is fond of saying, "is pleased to shine upon us," could do full justice,—a bald head, bordered with a modicum of white hair, a forehead of ample development, a rough weather-beaten complexion, lower features which come under the denomination of "ordinary," and a pair of dark, destructive-looking eyes, quick in motion and various in expression, by nature wrathful, often watchful, playful if need be, and where the interests of his principal demand it, sparkling with merriment and fun. He looks a compound of the sportsman, the comedian, and the sea-captain, possessing considerable patronage, and of an iron constitution. A glass of water is brought up and placed beside him, slightly coloured. He arranges his papers, and, rubbing his glasses, surveys his auditory, recognising here one and there one, and honouring each with a gentle inflection of the head, and a slight contraction of the eye by no means amounting to a smile—unless where he recognises a capitalist or a distinguished *intime*, when, sportive as a kitten, genial as mine host of the tavern, and yet with something of causticity in his humour, he cries to him to "come into court, you sir, and not be screening yourself that way from public observation," leaving no escape for

the capitalist, who obeys the injunction and advances within whisper-shot of his tutelary friend, for there's more between them than meets the cursory ear, and the capitalist is not one of the loungers. He then, still seated, calls upon the clerk to read the "conditions of sale," apologizing in a bluff tone for the tediousness of that ceremony, which he owns to be "flat and unprofitable," asseverating *vivâ voce*, that *if ever lines were applicable*, those lines of the great bard were applicable to the reading of "conditions of sale;" but to which, however, he patiently listens, with his eye-glasses over his nose, and a copy of the "unprofitable" document lying "flat" before him. Interruptions now begin to arise. Gentlemen with ready money *will* ask questions. It is of no avail for the auctioneer to tell them that the title is unquestioned, that the Lord Chancellor has confirmed its validity in a court of equity, and that so far as that point goes one might make oneself happy about it, and without more ado go home and sleep and

"end the heart-ache,

And the thousand natural cares that flesh is heir to,"—

he "must be satisfied," and catechises the advocate accordingly,—the catechumen looks condensation, and meets his inquiries with promptitude and effect.

I understand there are few that venture to ask questions of this gentleman who ever take much by their motion ; for if they elicit, as they often do, information favourable to the seller, so much the better for *him* ; and if the colloquy have the opposite tendency, such is his ready versatility, that he can anticipate a thrust with the needle's point, or chaff his adversary into hopeless silence.

He now stands up, and commences his exordium. This is surpassing. The beauties of nature are here eclipsed by the flowers of eloquence, and the figures of rhetoric cast into the shade by the nameless air with which he utters his eulogium on the house and grounds about to be knocked down to the highest bidder. I had been attracted to the scene by a perusal of his printed lucubrations, and now, in the presence of the master-spirit from which they had emanated, felt thankful that the property was so far beyond my poor means of investment as to leave me nothing to fear from the wiles of the arch-tempter before me. In his oral address he rejects all formalities of diction, throws aside the constraint of continuity, and speaks with a racy energy truly irresistible. He unites the acumen of the pleader, the *esprit* of the wit, and the fascination of the *improvisatore*,—makes his hits and points like a great

actor, and works them up with the aid of his potent physiognomy, his equally potent action, and his hammer. He states the valuation, and contends that it is too low,—and dilates upon the brightening prospects of agriculture, and of the blessed effects of Sir Robert Peel's new measure, the merits of which he declines discussing at length, but contents himself with simply predicting, upon his honour as a gentleman, that it must work incalculable good for the interests of all classes, and consequently of every class in particular. Upon his descending more into detail, I was struck by the felicity with which he dwelt on the exquisite adaptation of the land then under sale for the purpose of fattening bullocks. He was remarkably impressive here. There was a depth of conviction, a force, and a meaning in his enunciation of his belief in the land's capacity to fatten bullocks, which showed how completely he had thrown himself into his case; and the man must have been none other than a habitual sceptic who could have sat and heard those words from his lips, and have harboured even a lurking doubt that bullocks of any extraction, or of whatever previous habits of indulgence, both could, and were the choice given them *would*, have gorged themselves to repletion on the nutritious pasture in praise of which he

made this powerful appeal. The bidding is at its height, and he throws in a little episode about the chalybeate, which "only wanted encouragement, and Harrogate and Leamington would have to *hide their diminished heads*." He takes a sip of the coloured water. A meek man in the centre begs to know why the timber was not mentioned in the catalogue? The auctioneer affects incredulity, but finds, on inspection, that the important article in question had been omitted. He makes the acknowledgment; but, instead of apologising for the oversight, retaliates upon the inquisitor for his presumption, by telling him plainly he is now expected, without equivocation, to become the purchaser. The auction advances, and with every new offer he finds fresh matter for dissertation. He alludes to the contiguity of the railroad, and comments with infinite force upon the luxury of coming up to town a distance of a hundred miles and going home to an eight-o'clock dinner every day, which our poor forefathers could never have believed to be possible; and although this topic of wonderment, and the concomitant sneer at the past generation for only discovering principles of science and leaving to posterity the superior credit of their application, is somewhat threadbare, in his hands it loses all its monotony, and positively smacks

of originality. In proclaiming, also, the proximity of a church, he prettily confesses his faith in the utility of churches in general, the convenience of having them near one's residence, and the value of a religious reputation in the long run to respectable members of society. He half promises a seat in Parliament at the small expense of a princely hospitality; and on the same terms wholly promises the acquaintance of the solicitor of the place, who happens to be then at his elbow, and on whose heart, integrity, and cellar, he pronounces an encomium that might have suffused with blushes any other cheeks than those of a solicitor. There is a pause,—and he pretends to bring the affair to a close, “Going — going” —his left hand rising as he bends downwards till his chin almost touches the “conditions of sale,” lips clenched and eyebrows expanded as at the verge of an impending crisis. A modest-looking gentleman enters, and all eyes are turned upon him by a cry from the auctioneer, that if he wants a seat in Parliament, now is his time. “Do you guarantee the seat?” dryly interrogates a wag, noways interested in the sale. “Certainly, sir,” is the reply, “if *you* will condescend to buy the estate. *To be or not to be?* as one of our great poets has said —” “— Gay, in ‘The Beggar’s Opera,’” again interpolates the daring

wag, ambitious of fairly measuring wits with so distinguished a humorist. A burst of laughter gives the auctioneer breathing-time for adducing the name of his author, and he then turns upon his victim with a volley of merciless raillery, which annihilates his courage and his fancy at a blow. Other interruptions occur, which he encounters with the same bold front as before, and adding that nothing pleases him more than to be asked questions, as he knows they are always the prelude to a fresh bid. He traverses his ground again, and sums up with a declaration that the spot defies description — that it is fit for a little emperor — that there is *a* richness and *a* grandeur, together with *a* quietude and *a* repose about it, which in all his experience, which had been considerable, he had never seen equalled — that if it *has* a fault, it is that an expenditure of money in improvements on the little paradise were an utter impossibility ; and in fine, that his Grace the Duke of Wellington himself might be proud to make the place his residence.

Gifted and incomparable disposer of lands, tenements, and hereditaments ! Under sway of thy omnipotent art are the very senses quickened, the fancy warmed, and the credulity of the most obdurate bidder invoked, as by the spirit of a sorcerer. Thy

extemporaneous rhetoric is *not* strained: like the quality of Mercy, it is twice blessed, "it blesses him that *sells* and him that *buys*,"—

"It is mightiest in the mightiest,
And becomes the Great Auctioneer
Even better than his *advertisements*!"

It is now time to close: it is clear, from the countenances in his immediate vicinity, that the highest expectations have been realised: all are satisfied, the property is appreciated, and the auctioneer threatens to knock it down. He gives warning, that in one moment, in one *solitary* moment, the sacrifice must be made. He places his hammer to his heart, and vows he *feels* that he is making a sacrifice. It annoys him—he declares it annoys him, and his face assumes the look of a man stung by a musquito. This most matchless thing of the kind—a place fit for a little emperor—and a house that will last till the end of the world, to be *given* away!—"it offends him to the soul." As he gets pathetic, the nasal twang is more palpable. He is now trying the chance of an extra hundred. He says that, as it is the doom of man sometimes to be disappointed, so has he often in the course of his "long experience" felt the pangs of regret, but never to the extent to which he is agitated

now. He confesses at the full pitch of his lungs that "there is a reluctance in this arm to do its duty,"—it upbraids him—it won't let him,—a smile steals through his tear—a titter commences—he reins up, becomes ferocious, indignant, disgusted! roars "shame" upon the sacrilege, and then knocks the lot down with a polite bow to the purchaser,—and a draught of the coloured water is the climax.

MANNERISM.

THIS propensity argues a mental and moral weakness, an emulation after the mere semblance of merit at the expense of truth and good faith with the world. Through all degrees of society it may be traced—in palaces and boudoirs, clubs and coffee-houses, theatres, laboratories, and steam-boats; and we dare believe the monastic circles are not free from its contagion. High or low, learned or illiterate, frivolous or profound—and would it were not so—sacred or profane, the vice has no choice of territory, nor local or sectarian partialities. Even in our cathedrals and churches, to say nothing of the conventicle, how seldom do we hear the beautiful service read in a prayerful and natural way, from the prevalence of conventional mannerism imbibed at the University, and when once acquired, retained with superstitious tenacity! Pompous but insipid, pedantic and effeminate, tones and gestures, sadly mar the euphony and benign influence of these holy

exercises ; and the artificial spirit once engendered clings to the unwary practitioner,—for mannerism in the same individual affrights you again from the pulpit, to the destruction of the effects which unalloyed eloquence and sound doctrine should produce on a congregation. It cannot be denied that men are to be seen, young ones more particularly, who ascend the rostrum with an inordinate straining after effect, perceptible in the air with which they prelude their brief orisons, and succeed them with an emphatic survey of the passive scene around them, glowing internally, it may be feared, with an illicit sense of importance, or kind of egotistical sentimentality (which is beginning to be understood, though in these days of new coinage, no epithet has yet been assigned to it) ; sometimes with a not inexpressive eye riveted on a conjectural object which no one else can identify, and the whole countenance presenting an aspect of intense abstraction. Is it exaggeration to call this practical profanity ? And yet the individual referred to may be the first to mark such indecorums in a brother “labourer in the vineyard,” and most severe in their condemnation ; for one of the many striking inconsistencies into which the human character is betrayed by egotism is the sagacity with which a person remarkable for any

particular foible, though comparatively unconscious of its egregious existence in himself, detects and reprobates the same weakness in his neighbour. This truth might be held in view by the speculatist upon the philosophy of social antipathies.

In the law too, what unfledged gravity, what counterfeit profundity ! The constrained coldness of the young aspirant after the caustic accomplishments of the pleader, inimical to the seasonable impulses of his age ! The placid smile at a statistical discordancy, and his vacant stare as you interpolate the dull conference with a flash of humour ; the suavity of his lament at the trickery of an opponent, and the repulsion with which he hears from you anything tender or pathetic ; are indeed of the flagrancies that "dizzy the arithmetic of memory." And then at the bar, what contorted visnomies among the briefless ! biding their time, there they sit, instead of watching the proceedings, and culling practical lessons from the book of observation open before them, apparently absorbed in some mystic lucubration, not unfrequently, perhaps, conjecturing what might not some chance visitors in the gallery—idle observers, or fair physiologists—think of them, embryos of future "celebrated contemporaries of the youthful Victoria," biographed for the pages of monthly

magazines by some hyperbolical note-taker, or in the more enduring form of a three-volumed tale of metropolitan mysteries from the pen of a modern Evelina.

In another sphere, the celebrated —— was a great man, remarkable alike for his financial capacity and the *abandon* (to use no harsher term) of his exterior, so that his *physique* might have struck the linkboy equally with the physiognomist. An abstracted look is intellectual; but both hands pocketed, on the *pavé*, is a solecism either side of the Temple. Could not his lugubrious admirers emulate him in the higher walks of his eccentric genius, and soar after him into the region of his unutterable arithmetic?

The abounding zeal displayed by the shopkeeper in his calling, places his mannerism in the light of politeness. That Messrs. Tibbs and Bobbin do so conciliate and insinuate, in their own particular drawing-rooms, we cannot pretend to believe,—and so far their court manners are put on; but they are so from no more venal intent than to propitiate an equitable share of your favours for the support of an increasing wife and family, which their less-deserving rival across the way will otherwise monopolise; and which laudable object therefore they attempt to compass, as the aforesaid competitor would do, by

an effort of irresistible politeness—a quality never altogether to be impugned. Undoubtedly the pantomimic suavities of the flexible retailer, and the ever-sanguine pertinacity with which he tempts, and finally inveigles, his customers, and that wondrous endurance with which he waives his right to repel insinuations against the integrity of his craft and the goodness of his wares, have been often too much for our sobriety ; and the humour of the thing would be ample apology enough, even were those licensed decoyers by common consent condemned as a community of impostors—a good-tempered rogue we never at heart entirely repudiate, but a whimsical or fantastical one has an inalienable claim upon us ; and such, from their profoundly artificial manners, we should account the retail fraternity, were they not, as they indubitably are, very “ calendars ” of what good men should be, late and early exemplars of virtuous industry.

Upon the exculpatory list, however, let the actor have honourable precedence. He has a patent for mannerism. His art is cultivated out-of-doors, he cannot compose himself to study without the accessory of an “ audience,” save for the especial purposes which render task-work to him indispensable. Illusion is the “ atmosphere of his soul ; ” and no matter

what range he pretends to, it must be scenic illusion, or he dies. It would hardly seem honourable to the modern Roscii, but it is nevertheless a fact, that the sublime on the stage is generally penurious-looking off it, and the histrionic underling an "expensive" in Pall Mall. This is enigmatical, to say the least of it, and might suggest to the frequenter of London masquerades the incongruities there exhibited, where Harry the Fifth may be seen cowering to a bully, Hotspur afraid of a pistol, Jaques and Hamlet tossing for the supper expenses, and Cato gallivanting with the ladies.

It sits ill upon the *nouveau riche*, a man who, until now, sleeping or waking, had never dreamt of any thing but discharging his conscience and rendering just homage to his benefactor. No sooner, however, does he get the start of an unthrifty world than he "scorns the steps by which he did ascend," and ungratefully disowns his identity with an assumption of the graces and affectations of the strange clique into which he has purchased admittance. He speaks of his recent marriage *de convenance*, as a "quiet settling down," and begins to excuse himself at the convivial board for having, in compliance with the domestic code, to which he has recently engaged himself, learned to eat pudding and to drink tea

(both propensities much derided by bagmen), as though such comfortable vanities, to which in truth our hero had never been a stranger, required an apology. He cons, too, the slang of gentility, and comprehends under one generic title his "lady," footman, rival for the municipal gown, Majesty itself, the Premier and his own *partner*, as "persons" very extraordinary or very uncouth, or very nice "persons." He was once a useful member of society, always ready with the helping hand on parochial emergencies, superintending schools, exercised a wholesome check upon vestry finances, and kept a collateral eye upon watchmen, pumps, and shutters. He has now withdrawn himself from this sphere of usefulness, and set up for a *précieux*. He invites you to dine, and begins with the soup to rhapsodise about Rookwood and Cerito (both in a breath), admires "Milton's Paradise Lost," but prefers "his Regain'd," and tortures you with many other such unseasonablenesses upon which he has newly lighted. Now, if this "person" would usher the assumption of his new character by turning the key of his cellar, and dining at two without stimulants, and engaging an evening tutor for a probationary two or three years or so, and thus, tempering the soil with elementary culture, some chance of success might be

secured, and then he might sport his enamel to advantage. But to plunge all at once, unannealed, from raw insignificance into the calorific atmosphere of comparative exquisitism, argues an indecorousness of spirit which might have shocked him when he wore an apron, and a temerity which angels might fear to emulate.

How the young imitate the old ! distorting really comely appearances ; and the compliment is reciprocated,—antique whipper-snappers with switches, and young codgers with ponderous walking-sticks—living anachronisms—flutter and waddle about town in paradoxical inversion. Stiff manners, white neckcloths of a morning, cloth boots, excessive rings, very remarkable hats in crown or brim, perukes, epicurism, much brandy taking, avoidance of sacred observances, unaccountable fits of taciturnity, and other such anomalies in very young men, may all be mannerism, scarcely to be mistaken. But it has its more recondite phases. Do you shrink with dismay from the swaggerer who requites your familiar salutation with a volley of contumelious slang, laughs in your face without colourable pretext, and has the same machinery of attack and identical verbal ammunition, for every victim whom he thinks peaceable enough to receive his fire? Before you set him down for irreclaimable,

be sure he is not a mannerist ; likely enough he is a lily-livered Bobadil, and is only puddering now to repair a sorry reputation of which incipient puberty is beginning to make him ashamed : and as it is too late for half-measures, he tries to atone by aping the *gaucheries* of some pugilistic prototype since knocked on the sconce and gathered to his ancestors.

The lack-a-daisical mannerist is a sickly flower — not “born to blush unseen.” His novitiate is a season of severe self-conflict, superinducing, however, a veritable lassitude of soul and body, which makes his effeminacy at length sit easy upon him. Affectation may, in this sense, be said to work its own cure — though at the expense of the man’s constitution.

Great men should really avoid extremes, if only to discountenance the vice of mannerism. See the swarms of youngsters, under forty, who, indifferent to the symmetry of etiquette and stature, because they’re a little florid, and have a credit with their tailors, break the hearts or split the sides of their amadas, with a stupendous devotion to an inimitable *beau-idéal*. Those custard-cup wristbands would not be amiss, if they could be kept clean. The economy of eye-glasses has latterly become too abstruse for desultory discussion.

Wits ought to be very plain in their dress and

manner. We object to too much expression even in an intelligent countenance ; but the imitation of it or its correlative vivacities by an imbecile, is distressing. A forlorn chuckle, or a vapid wink of the eye, are exhibitions at which very humanity shudders. Is there any ground for believing that in this, the famed land of practical sense and virtue, men of pure average lives and conversation, and untainted reputations have been known, under the infatuations of this strange passion, to compound with Mephistopheles for a term of life, receiving in exchange for forfeited respectability, substance, peace of mind, troops of friends, and moral sanity, nothing but the melancholy pleasures connected with the unprofitable science of mannerism.

THE DISAPPOINTED MAN.

He started in life with the notable resolve to be Cæsar or nothing, and he has compassed neither, for he is not Cæsar, and he is something worse than a negation—an impersonation of rampant melancholy. It would be going too far to say he may be known at sight, for he is not quite so woe-begone as to have become a sloven, nor is he *touched* enough to have earned the appellation of “a character.” He appears still what is called a *gentleman*, inspiring involuntary respect for his person and a superficial confidence in his honour. But, start a topic—and see the *animus* that possesses him. He is a loyalist, and God-blesses his sovereign, but hopes her young head won’t be turned. Of feminine beauty in the general he will descant like a fanatic upon the gauds of Bartlemy Fair, for he has forsworn the sex, and, steadfast to his vow as he best can be, eschews the blandishments of sense, and, like Hamlet with Ophelia, contaminates impulse with intemperance, and controls

his thoughts with words. Maidens are children—matrons are speculists; the former only pretty puppets in the hands of intriguing mothers, or, if anything more intelligent, heartless, mercenary, and triflers all, requiring only to be known to be despised; the mothers are harpies, and legitimate traders in the flesh and blood of their progeny. Such the current of his commentaries upon the diviner half of his species, flowing through his scurrilous lips like ichor from the wound of a tender disappointment!

He would have been *famous*. For no less than the authorship of a new philosophy, free from the cant of opposing schools, expounding all manner of truth, and with an unction to “charm the trees,” and make the welkin to resound, “not for an age, but for all time.” But, mistaking inclination for power, heat for fire, sympathy for fancy, and assurance for security, he has failed of the brilliant consummation, the bare thought of which could more than electrify himself with delicious transports. An indifferent ear is turned to his appeal. His strain is not felt to be musical, nor impassioned, nor has it the humour to amuse, or the touches of nature that vibrate in the human breast. But, he says it *has*, and maintains his ground, proof against proof. The fatal sentence is pronounced. not in mitigated phrase, but with

absolute silence—this he proclaims a villany, his wrong, and a nation's disgrace—and supports his position by instituting contrasts between the popular and the unpopular, and, mistaking coincidence for consequence, arguing that because popularity hath been abused, neglect must be the test of merit—making short work of criticism, of which vituperation is the strain, and his own martyrdom the moral—for, shame to say, he makes it personal, picks up spiteful rumours in by-places, tales of school-days and anecdotes of scandal, exaggerates his facts, colours the picture, not failing to amplify *ad libitum* on his special opportunities of observation, and thus essays to lie a poor *lion's* life away with the pestilent breath of detraction. Many a sufferer is indebted for the pangs of disappointment not less to the folly of sanguine and misjudging friends than to the influence of his own inherent vanity. The youngster displays what they are pleased to term a *precocity*—more than the average inclination for study and aversion to sport, and a native talent beside in inditing metrical compliments to his godmother, lampooning his poor uncle, and quizzing his bosom friend behind his back. He is petted as “a genius”—so like Pitt in profile, or Fox in full front—great things are predicted of him—he is the future bishop,

or secretary, or chancellor. Anon he makes his *début*. It is unsuccessful. Excuses are devised: he tries again—worse than before: interest is then made for him—influence sought, and bought, and feigned, but all to no purpose, for he cannot soar, not even like a bubble, nor against the ponderous inflation of pride sustain himself one inch above *terra firma*. Now might a dose of true humility save him and make all right—but, expectation crammed, he cannot swallow it. Fate has decoyed, then tricked, him—so “he turns and rends.” The atrabilarian! He indites the universe for conspiracy—the time is out of joint—the march of intellect retrograde—the tables are turned,—he would rank with the great neglected, or flatters himself he has been beaten in a conflict—he’s a perpetual monodist, and a dismal tune he sings to, the screech-owl’s lament, a requiem for fictitious obsequies, a wail for blighted promise. Accost him, but do it warily, because of his disdain, its copiousness, its implacableness, and the profundity of its depths, from out of which, like a lunatic, he dares the great globe to single combat.

The disappointed *statesman*, who has had the trouble of growing rich ere he indulged the ambition to be great, is more subdued in his melancholy, and not by any means so vicious in defeat. He is not

hopeless neither, but will abate his dimensions, and relax from the magnificence of pretension to the obscurity of usefulness, without a nightmare or a groan ; for, apart from the advantage of his matured age, the new walk of emulation he has chosen is not less practical in its character than prominent in attraction for the adult student, and he very speedily learns that perspicacity is better than "blarney," and business-tact than Promethean fire.

But watch the mammonist himself, the slave of gold — any time but when he's asleep. He anticipates the dawn, and leaves his wholesome bed, not a mouse nor a lap-dog stirring, to sit robed like a Mussulman or an expectant accoucheur, exploring mentally the state of the markets and ruminating with a cool head upon the inscrutable providence of fortune. In the pursuit of boundless wealth his whole humanity is absorbed. His industry has been rewarded with success—but he would earn enough to pay his way to heaven. In the flush of confidence, he makes a rash stake, his estate is involved in a labyrinth, his skill is baffled, the concatenation transpires, and he is in common *parlance* ruined. What becomes of him ! If men could but prize disappointment as it deserves, it might prove to them the most valuable of the lessons of experience, but too often its effects are to

exasperate the mind and poison the springs of action. So with the money-hunter, when he has nothing to fall back upon in his day of adversity. Incensed with care, he seeks to drown it in the bowl, stifle it with uproar, or charm it away with gas-light—to slake his fevered thirst with fire. He dares not look his destiny in the face, but runs—misery at his heels—and keeps up the melancholy dance till a brain-fever places him under a new economy, and a subscription has to be raised to place his accomplished daughters “out in the world.”

Is he a disappointed son of Mars? To him then go for statistics of favouritism, and official corruption in high places, and he'll discourse with you upon that theme until his eyelids cease to wag, sighing with woeful ditty made to the mysteries of promotion, stigmatizing his compeers in *succession*, or storming at a breach of patronage. The brevet was his only windfall—and his heart feels as old as the service that has sickened it. Or, has a distant territory been the scene of his experiment? and did he leave his native shore “when George the Third was king,” bounding with high and martial aspiration to return with fame and fortune after the manner of the happy heroes? The novitiate over, the calenture subsides—and he one day comes home with a small stipend and

a grey head, to view the alterations in the metropolis, and hear about what sort of people his deceased relations were, and to tell us of the undoubted characteristics of Eastern governors, the discomforts of a desolate campaign, the horrors of an itinerant mess, and the absolute dearth of female society and good tailors abroad,—and to put himself under the care of our most eminent physician—

“ Sick, sick ; unfound the boon ———— ”

Alas, he too must minister to himself, account his ailment a chimera, ponder glad or sad of his *right* to realise his *wishes* ; contemplate duty as the equivalent of honour, and read *Rasselas through*, which he couldn't do of yore for thinking of his crimson jacket—and who can tell the ordeal he has passed since that bright day, but THE DISAPPOINTED MAN !

THE SANGUINE MAN.

THIS is an evergreen,—nourished by the storms of life!—His years are near upon threescore, his mis-carriages have at least equalled that number, he has fathomed the depths of disappointment, has, indeed, been “a pipe for fortune to *finger*,” if not to “sound what stop she pleases;” he knows he is now on the declivity, and that by prescription of nature the rest should soon “be labour and sorrow”—and yet he’s as *sanguine* as ever! Analyse him we cannot, nor conjecture by what patent process of embalmment the sanguine man has thus conserved his spirits and his springs of enterprise alive amid the heap of ashes—refuse of vain hopes—of which his heart is the centre, without seeming aware of the contiguity, and which were quite sufficient to “stap the vitals” of any less “sanguine” man than himself. His career will not bear tracing; for he has been a rolling stone, and has shifted his ground, like Van Amburgh or the Inimitable Dwarf. The sanguine man is by no

means *respectable*; it is not in reason that he should be, for though he have many a time enjoyed the reputation of prosperity, his reverses have outnumbered his "hits," and the *éclat* of his success has been obliterated by the more enduring taint of his misfortunes. He will not do to be seen about with, in the sanctuaries and thoroughfares of life; but a *tête-à-tête* with him, *cum privilegio*, in jovial or rural solitude, screened from the notice of a prying world, "chancing it," incog. on a journey, or ensconced in the snuggerly of a chimney corner, is always delightful—there is an *animus* about him pertaining exclusively to the "sanguine man," which refreshes the spirit and disposes to Christian charity. Not one word does he utter on the beaten topic of the miseries of life; he pesters you with no expositions of deep-laid schemes for avenging an indignity or a wrong, no moody speculations upon what he might have been, or might have done, under circumstances which did not transpire, or under influences to which he never was accessible; no woeful lamentation on the intracability of youth, the impracticability of age, the reckless sway of passion, the expensiveness of experience, the wantonness of chance and the vanity of all things,—with no asperities to pervert, no *tædium vitæ* to depress, he takes the sunny side, and peers into the

radiant future. Fortune seeking to him,—though “buffets and rewards” have fallen to his lot in unequal succession, and he has “taken them with equal thanks,”—has seemed a golden dream. By a felicitous endowment of the mental palate he has tasted the unctuosities of pleasure, but only *drunk* of the waters of bitterness. The lessons of life lighten, but not *enlighten* him. “The uses of adversity” to him, are rather bracing than “sweet,” they give him nerve without philosophy, plasticity without power, aspirations in place of honour, multifold “kicks,” and very few “halfpence;” and hapless as his case must be with the genius he defies, he is game and dilemma-proof to the last, and comes off “more than a conqueror,” though a very considerable loser, from every conflict in which he shrinks not from engaging. Timely insensibility is his great, main accomplishment. He seems to thrive upon the sport of being knocked round and about upon the sconce, and rises from a flabbergastering “like a giant refreshed.” Different from ordinary mortals, his happiness does not fluctuate according to his circumstances, although his energies expand with the exigencies that call them into operation; when he fails in an undertaking, he has but to transfer his ever available powers, such as they are, to a new theatre of exertion,—the parapher-

nalities of his craft lie all in a small compass, and he can change his quarters at the shortest notice with a world of impunity on his head, light and handy as a porter's knot. He has vague notions that something particularly brilliant is in store for him, and he consoles himself for a *faux-pas* by the conclusion that he has merely stumbled on the wrong box. He is a very hero in defeat. He wants no breathing-time from blowing his exhaustless bubbles. Versatile and invulnerable—buoyant, invincible adventurer ! Fit match for the demon Despair with all his terrors, fling them in what imagery he may. Great things and little, swift or slow, stern reality or “unreal mockery,” alike find him *cap-à-pie*, armed at all points, or at the signal of disaster winged for extemporaneous flight into new regions of experiment. Does he win?—visions of after-winnings cast his real gains into the shade. Or lose?—“bad luck's” a gratuity, and 'twere ill to “look the gift horse in the mouth.” All weathers suit him ; “the skyey influences” are *all one* to him ; and all conditions, life, death, or immortality, may be blessed.

One hardly knows whether more to commiserate or to envy the “sanguine man.” Trusting solely to imagination, without regard to the monitions of experience, basing his calculations on hypotheses, and

living ever in the future, he has been betrayed into such aberrations from the ceremonious path, as preclude him from the means of amendment and the right of atonement, and fix him without the pale of what "the judicious" count respectability. *Credit* shudders at his approach.—On the other hand, though his head is a poor one, the spirit of liberty, the romantic ardour, the soul of fortitude, the victorious *heart*, are inherently and inalienably his : and it is a genial lesson for you of the conventional school, who deal not in chimeras, and pursue your avocations "by the card," to chance upon him, and witness, if but for the passing hour, how independently of accident and extrinsic circumstance the principle of happiness may flourish in the human breast.

" Quod petis hic est—est Ulubris ! "

THE CAUTIOUS MAN.

HE was cautious from a boy. Shy of acquaintances without an introduction, learned in antidotes against danger, chary of feeling—upon principle, a connoisseur in flannel, lamb's-wool, and thick soles, in cold and damp weather. Never let off a squib, and never took heartily to his gun. No skater, nor smoker, nor sitter-up, nor scribbler, nor adventurer nor—lover! His didactic mamma, or his circumspect nurse, or his own precocious instinct, must have imbued his infant mind with an anticipatory dread of the innumerable perils and pitfalls, snares, steel-traps, and spring-guns, which beset the pilgrim's path through life; for he was ever *en garde*,—when the least sprightly with a companion he was always widest awake, temptation lured him in vain, he looked before he leapt, and therefore never stumbled, nor ventured upon strange ground, nor trespassed in forbidden precincts. And the inevitable consequence of all this is, that he is open to no influences which do

not bear the "test of strict examination;" he punctiliously beats time to the pulsations of his heart, and devoutly hopes, that as he has begun so he may continue, to run the course allotted him, without incurring the disgrace of being "imposed upon," or "taken aback," either from lack of prudence, or a want of foresight; and that, however true it may be, that no mortal is perfect, or *omnibus horis sapit*, he may be preserved from that direst of delinquencies, the victimizing, or, in his own phrase, the "making an ass of himself," as other Christians have done before him.

His first solicitude in rising of a morning is to elude the contingency of a *chill*, and his alacrity witnessed in the earlier stages of his toilette might be mistaken for constitutional, or a skip-and-jump effusion of pure animal spirits. But no — the source of all his *brusquerie* is an abiding horror of colds. Perhaps one of the most impracticable things short of the marvellous, would be to allure him into the open air (in any but the most genial weather) without his having broken his fast, even were it only upon a biscuit or a sip of coffee; such excursions being, as he terms them, foolhardy, and much best let alone — unless at the call of duty, which of course were imperative. And having breakfasted, he loiters, or pro-

vokes a discussion or sets about writing a long letter, or sends for 'Matthew' to parley with, touching the farrier's bill, or the broken fences, or the depredations of his neighbour's poultry—anything, as an excuse for "sitting awhile" after his meal, like a mindful disciple of Abernethy.

It is still better to see him mount his steed, after a scrutinizing survey of his fore-quarters, done with an air of humanity worthy the incomparable Richard Martin—yet all with a view to his own security. How he reconnoitres, and wishes the mail-coach at its journey's end as it gallops past him on the road, and frightens Dobbin into a morning hornpipe or an incipient fit of the staggers. With what a calm sobriety does he greet his bluff friend who jogs up to him on the back of old Bucephalus, and accosts him with the usual obstreperous salutation——, resisting the inspiration of his humour, forbearing to enter into the spirit of his jokes, keeping a vigilant eye on the curb and the snaffle, and sitting on his saddle with all the inflexibility of the cockswain of a wherry, or the man in armour at the Lord Mayor's Show.

Edifying, also, to watch the tact with which he comports himself as a stage-coach traveller. He looks inside, and sees somebody there with whom he would not be so closely confronted. Observe the

deliberation with which he climbs aloft, the methodical equipment of his person according to the temperature and prospects of the weather, and the remarkable discretion he displays in his casual intercourse with the other passengers,—for as he says, good-humour is all very well, and Mr. Tallboys there is an agreeable enough sort of fellow, but men who want nothing are not so pleasant, and it is best to keep on the safe side. And then, admire the toleration he displays on occasion of encroachment or presumption from one of those ruffians that occasionally infest the public vehicles,—an altercation with one of them, as he well observes, might upset one for the whole day. He is necessarily a peaceable man, and in his commonplace book, commenced some years back, may be found, among other authorities for cultivating that spirit, a citation from Shakspeare, wherein a novice is admonished to “beware of entrance to a quarrel.” Whether the exhortation that follows, “but being in, bear it, that the opposer may beware of thee,” is equally appreciated by the “Cautious Man,” may be doubtful; but the praise due to him for averting the occasion for consulting it cannot be withheld.

The acumen with which he pursues his daily vocation, is evidenced in the pages of his banker’s book, his rent-toll, or his ledger, by official record of his

rapid promotion, or the celebrity of his professional name, and the purity of his general reputation — save that where he has to adjudicate on the conflicting claims of self-interest and benevolence, it is feared he is seldom actuated by “an inclination to the more benign extreme.” But, his actions are unimpeachable, whatever may be thought of his motives. Frugal in his cheer, temperate in his pleasures, narrow in his views of human accountability, and with all the doors in his house well bolted, he seeks his early pillow, with a mind tolerably at ease, and “sleeps well.”

It does enhance one's notions of the consistency and uniformity of his character thus to behold him in all situations and seasons preserving that self-custody and ever-watchful care to remote consequences, which give a practical stamp to his imperturbability, and have earned for him the designation of “The Cautious Man.”

Long talkers oppress him, and he gives them the slip ; humorists are unsafe at the best, and so he never trusts them ; boors, he does not dislike—in the way of business ; upstarts, he regards as arrant fools ; and “humbugs,” as their own enemies. He is especially cautious with the “gentler sex,”—knowing their power, and the impunity with which they wield it, he thinks much evil of them in his heart ere they

can be admitted to his confidence,—with all their charms, they are but *attachées*, and their scale of reflected respectability is the thermometer of his love for them.

He is too “cautious” a man not to know that “honesty is the best policy.” Therefore, if you can pledge him to your service, by all means secure him. He is no great “catch” in a bargain ; as a coadjutor, he loves “the lion’s share ;” he can “beat you at barter ;” and is only to be circumvented by a villain. But there *are* relations, in which he may subserve the interests of his fellow-creatures, and in retaliation for the general selfishness of his life, they should be imposed on him without reserve. He makes a good umpire or assignee,—and if you have an investment in *shares*, rely on it your “company” would do well to make him a director. He is a good guardian, and would make an admirable godfather, if an entire disregard of the duties of that sacred relation were not so unscrupulously sanctioned by the world. But, he is exact in his observance of the secular code ; and we may conscientiously pay him the compliment of affirming, that if you are about to make your will, and have not a pound to spare for legacies, you cannot appoint a better executor than the *Cautious Man!*

THE GENTEEL MAN.

AMIDST our modern perversions of language it may be observed that the once-honoured epithet "genteel" has been appropriated to a class of people, as the Methodists and Quakers, eminently peculiar to themselves. They will not do for psychological analysis, but a superficial portraiture of them may not be unacceptable.

A "genteel" man is rather carefully than well dressed: he is especially elaborated about the neck and breast: he is expensive in gloves, and less so in hats than in hat-brushes: his flaw in dress is in the article of boots (though we shouldn't "look down at his feet"), which are low-priced for a person affording to carry about him the property which a "genteel man" bedizened for the day usually does. He walks deliberately, and observes the scene and scenery about him with temper and equanimity: though fatigued by exercise, he prefers dragging on to his destination to chancing it in a public vehicle; and if the driver

(not knowing) importune him with a proffered abatement of the fare, he feels a thrill. With newspaper in hand he culls choice morsels from the general contents to fortify his resources for evening conversation, besides occasionally looking for a letter of his own to the Editor, upon some minor matter of metropolitan economy, such as the better regulation of scavengers, water-carts, and cab-stands, or the conditional exclusion of sweeps from the principal thoroughfares. He gives a formal and steady attention to his business, but is slow to take a hint or receive advice tendered in the purest spirit of disinterestedness. His intercourse is more lengthened with a subordinate than with a superior—the interest he takes in the conference depending rather upon his importance with the individuals than on that of the business he has to transact with them. He is scrupulous in his diet, and takes his lean of a chop at one o'clock ; after which he begins to feel insipid and may be provoked into asperities towards his dog or other helpless dependant, provided there be present no more formidable witness of such aberration from sectarian decorum. Inanity torments him for an hour or two, when he revives and sallies forth to display himself to his slight acquaintance. He stands upon his reputation for “ gentility,” and

moves about without fear of molestation : no one, he knows, can call him hail-fellow, slap him on the back, or disparage his dignity by that accursed familiarity, which is more odious to him than calumny or carnal sin. He promenades with an emulation and a full faith in his realization of the cut and finish of a marvellous gentleman. He keeps a sharp look-out for distinguished *intimes* and salutes them in turn with feverish nonchalance. He dines abstemiously and with uncompromising etiquette. His boon qualities are inconsiderable, his conversational lore being principally confined to matters connected with the Home Department, viz. the magistracy, police, poor-laws, and rumours touching the harmless predilections and antipathies of exalted personages, and his literary taste is imbued with the same contractedness and tendency. Mechanical science is a sealed book to him, and on the too popular topic of accidents he prefers those which occur in high life. He may possibly shine at the whist-table. He recoils from excitement, poetry, speculative philosophy, sentiment, scandal, and, though last not least, snuff. If he has a stall at the Opera, well and good ; but he won't come down from the boxes merely for the ballet. He keeps excellent hours ; is seldom seen in a stable, never in a billiard-room ; and never

eats oysters (though he likes them) nor smokes a mild Havannah, and never bets. Among other abstinences he may be said never to make love ; he can't : he will try by way of imitating others, but breaks down invariably. He never *attempts* such a thing before dinner. Champagne may deliver him of a squalid compliment ; and with an extra fillip he has been known to sport a misquotation from Ovid or the "Melodies ;" but such instances are rare, and reasonably so, for they are rare sport to the object that inspires his abortive efforts of art. His susceptibility to the tender passion appears to be little more than a vague sense or appreciation of any particularly-marked kindness evinced towards him by any highly respectable and unexceptionable female whatsoever.

THE DANDY.

THE Dandy appears to be a specimen of humanity *sui generis*, standing out in superfine relief from the general throng—an instinctive nonconformist, sophisticate in fashion as in nature, and arrayed against the conventionalities of his species in the garb of a “fantastico,” nothing if not pictorial.

Yet, though costly, and sightly, and brilliant to the sense, he is not all vanity; exulting in his proficiency in the science of elaboration more than in the eminence, spite of all, it procures him. There is a chasteness in his profusion, a tincture of austerity in his very luxuriance. The rude critic does not estimate his subtilty, and is far from dreaming that he may by possibility be a philosopher. But it has been thought abroad, that forasmuch as the Dandy tribe, so far as the chronicles record, has never been convicted of generic or sectarian imbecility; they may yet reconcile themselves to a disapproving world, and that in the progress of enlightenment we may see

the Dandy, now "caviare to the general," assume his rightful station amongst us, and become as conspicuous, radiate as brightly, and comport himself as *exquisitely* in a moral sense as he has hitherto done in a physical one. The way is open to him. Unrevealed, he is yet untarnished, and needs no perfume of Arabia to vindicate his claim to confraternity with his kind. He may yet make a character. At present he is but an enigma.

THE BLIND FIDDLER.

THERE is a Blind Fiddler in the city, as well known there as Wilkie's picture in the shop-windows. He is a genuine character, as far as he goes — that is to say, he is thoroughly blind, and he is a thorough “fiddler.” Not a thorough *violinist*, be it understood — all-accomplished in the practice, theory, and appreciation of his art, — but a thorough, pertinacious “fiddler ;” neither above nor below his calling ; neither so refined as to care much for intonation, nor so lost in the vagrancy of his craft as to fail in securing a certain subsistence by its exercise ; looking less to music as the minister of his fame than to his fiddle as the staff that supports his position in the world ! priding himself more on his notoriety than his accomplishment ; a practitioner, rather than a student of his art ; the relentless “fiddler.” Considering what Blind Fiddlers, both to hear and to look at, usually are, his fiddling and his *personnel* are both decidedly of a superior order. He does not con-

descend to mere snatches, but plays a thing *through*; is never without his rosin, has always four strings to his instrument, and actually *can* tune it. The individual here spoken of is in the habit of visiting the alleys near the Exchange, about four or five o'clock in the afternoon, when it is in human nature in those parts to require a little refreshment, and men of business are accustomed to retire in small knots and coteries into hilarious seclusion after the pother and bustle of the day. He is attended by a boy with a harp, the very image of the Fiddler—excepting that, like all sons of blind fathers, he has a brilliant pair of eyes; and a girl (another strong family likeness) with a box, who collects the contributions. He takes his stand by the door of the principal tavern: in due time he draws his fiddle from a shabby green bag, which he carries himself, and, twisting his head to make room for it under his left ear, commences the operation of “tuning,” which is soon accomplished. In theatric phrase, “the doors are now open;” a sensation is created, his little retinue begins to collect about him,—the adjacent fruit-woman or her assistant, the neighbouring ticket-porter, and the “Beauty of the Alley”—a comely vendor of floricultural delicacies—approach him. These are his privileged customers; they are on his free-list, and are

expected to give nothing. The very first urchin threading the thoroughfare, and not tied to time, is arrested instinctively by the gathering scene that meets his eye, and after him every successive straggler, until an "audience," decent in numbers if not in *quality*, is collected to do honour to the first ebullition of the bow. A stamp of the foot, and the concertante commences,—an unpleasing, abstruse, and even difficult performance, for the Blind Fiddler is a pedant in his way, and his most impracticable bits he produces first, while he is fresh in the market, and can best *command* attention. Incipient harmonics, abortive double stops and chromatics, transitions, bursts and pauses, and an emulation of all the wondrous clap-trap which we are instructed to consider, when well done, as embracing the heights and mysteries of the science, grace the introductory display of his powers. By the termination of his first piece, he has, perhaps, a body of a dozen of the commonalty around him—the ticket-porter, the floriculturist, the fruiterer or her delegate, the urchin not tied to time, and the successive stragglers, together making up an "audience" of about that number. With the gradual increase of the company the excitement of the performer evidently rises, every accession of a footstep is an incentive to fresh exertion,

and by the time he has finished his second exhibition, he has fairly warmed into something like “a feeling of his business.” The crowd thickens, and a policeman stalks by to see that all is orderly. While the box goes round for chance contributions, the Fiddler puts his *Cremona* between his knees, lift his hat from his head, and takes from it a cotton *Belcher*, with which he smoothes his somewhat flushed cheeks and throbbing temples—but calls for no vulgar aids to “whet his whistle,” and betrays no further indications of exhaustion. He is calm and reserved in his triumph—the cynosure of the court, the *lion* “of the minute”—conscious of his attraction, but with no unseemly air of presumption or impunity, he reposes in the short interval of silence, thinking on his reputation, his coffers, and his supper. By this time, he has no inconsiderable section of the public under his spell, for besides those standing around him, he counts twice their number of better friends and supporters in the coffee-room, for which he presumes himself to be specially retained, and to which he more particularly dedicates his humble services. Stockbrokers, with their pints of port—auctioneers, with their half-pints—captains, with their beloved grog—cigar-smokers, who “can’t eat,” and have no patience to wait till they’re hungry—landlords, and their nieces

“in the bar”—and though not last nor least, *waiters*. These latter functionaries especially relish the music ; —they seem almost to break bounds for the nonce, and cease to account themselves public property. Under ordinary circumstances, and where there is no excuse for insubordination, it is scarcely permitted to the waiter of any pretensions to respectability to vent the impertinence of good spirits, the elasticity of common cheerfulness, or in any way to relax the cold automatonism which constitutes the etiquette of his order ; but at this moment, and under this stimulus, he is all secret levity and life,—suits the action to the note, and hums a discord to the screeching cadence, wherever he can poke his nose “behind the arras,” and escape the notice of “the gentlemen.” He will take a peep at the fiddler’s daughter through the crack of the door, or ogle the flower-vendor through a window corner. Happy, if he find an excuse for crossing the area to purchase an extra newspaper, or *try* to obtain change for a light sovereign ;—he fails not in his flight to salute the master of the throng, and in returning, to whisper in his willing ear a “bespeak,” for some popular tune that anybody may understand. Whereupon father and child strike up “Where the Bee sucks,” “Auld lang Syne,” or “Sally in our Alley,”—which the poor steward

listens to with all the emotion which the temperature of those dark purlieus will allow so small a man as a waiter to indulge. The alteration of his strain is decidedly a change for the better ; every one now listens with ease, curiosity gives place to pleasure, and noise is exchanged for sentiment which finds an echo in every breast. The waiter, who at first was only excited, now becomes entranced. By changing his theme from the “astonishing” (for which, though he played like a Paganini, he should hardly be appreciated by such an auditory) to the more natural and homely style for which his abilities are better adapted, the fiddler attracts additional listeners in the surrounding habitations. The door of the opposite cigar-shop is thrown open, and the charms of melody help to cleanse it of its reeking vapours. A group of idlers who had been whiling a spare half-hour with the picture-dealer at the corner, criticising the last caricature, debating the terms of a projected raffle, or canvassing the state of the market in that respected gentleman’s particular line of business, are instantaneously drawn by the burst of a popular air to something more than a consciousness of the presence of the blind fiddler. Even the picture-dealer himself, accustomed to the constant repetition of his visits, fails not to present himself on the steps, and under

pretence of shaking the cloth with which he had been dusting a gilded frame, to take his invariable glance at the Blind Fiddler. Notaries' clerks, or, for aught that may be, notaries themselves, with pens behind their ears and bunches of cherries in their fingers, pop out their heads from lofty casements, two or three stories high, and with "greedy ear devour up his discourse." Housekeepers with their needlework are seen standing at the doors, and housemaids manifest themselves from attic windows. The cellarman half emerges from his trap-door, one hand holding a tallow candle, and the other resting on the flag-stones, gazing and simpering with sudden delight. If the value of the entertainment be estimated according to its effects, there are few who ever listen to the Blind Fiddler, who do not in some sort feel themselves lightened by the strain,—and therefore he deserves a handsome requital of his labours. There is something refreshing and humanising in the scene. The very heart of the vicinity is, as it were, stirred into unanimous life and enjoyment. Such sights do not greet us in the more *musical* quarters of the town. The fiddlers of Pall Mall and St. James's complain bitterly of the times. The Blind Fiddler in the city looks prosperous, proud, and contented. He has all the appearance of robust health and mental quietude,

the promise of a green old age, and a long engagement yet as fiddler to the citizens. He is the first man of his rank, in the first city in the world ! These are his claims to public support. It has pleased Providence to invest him with another claim, to which more pathetic allusion might here be allowed, were his popularity less permanently established than it is,—but in behalf of an *afflicted* fellow-creature, the sympathies of an English heart can play “without a prompter.” All therefore that need be added for the information of any reader, who may hereafter recognise the subject of this sketch, and who might otherwise be ignorant of “the story of his life,” and the full extent of his merit, is that he has maintained his prominent post—and “given universal satisfaction” in it—for upwards of five-and-twenty years, together with an unimpeachable reputation for sobriety, honesty, and modesty. He is a good father—and really a capital FIDDLER.

FALSE ESTIMATES.

PROMPTITUDE in action has been the theme of eulogy with moralists in all ages, and its importance exemplified in the lives of practical men distinguished in their sphere and generation. A man deficient in many material qualifications, by force of this habit alone, overcomes difficulties, and commands a success in his enterprises which others with less decision, though more variously endowed, contend with and toil after in vain. But, like every other good thing, it is perverted and misapplied. It is all very well for "action to follow thought as the thunder-clap the flash," and there is something inspiriting in the bare contemplation of such electric energy ; but it is a woeful mistake to suppose it necessary, or, without prejudice to truth and justice, practicable, to form judgments with the promptitude with which we act upon them. We, however, become enamoured of a characteristic ; and because it has been found useful as an executive virtue, extend the range of its application,

employ it in abstract speculation, and manufacture opinions* on men and things with a hap-hazard celerity, which, traced in its consequences, may account for much of the strife and discord which so lamentably prevail amongst the various orders of society in this Christian country. We get a reputation for promptitude, and, resolving to uphold it under all imaginable circumstances, pronounce upon the character of an individual without the interchange of a syllable, think to penetrate the designs of men through the subtle disguises of manner, and holding it derogatory to halt between two opinions, make up our minds upon matters on which the wisest men differ without even moderate research or deliberation. Careful consideration cannot fail to show the folly of such precipitation. It will, in the first place, teach the self-confident physiognomist, by the discovery of numerous exceptions, that neutralise his false rule of penetration, that this "art to read the mind's construction in the face," this ocular system of moral criticism or physical standard of mental anatomy, is a fallacious one, leading to frequent error and false estimates of character, in which the vagaries of affectation under show of animation, sedateness, and intenseness, are taken as the indications of the most profound and attractive qualities by which an individual can be

distinguished ; patient merit and the quiet medium of propriety are confounded with dulness ; and the worthy, but afflicted, and therefore disagreeable, valetudinarian is condemned unheard, as an unmitigated, unsufferable bore.

Among the impostors alluded to, in the class of animated people, we see constant motion, a flickering susceptibility of expression, ever in action, either from the operation of inevitable impressions, or in pursuit of them. Such people smile, laugh, chuckle with the eye, compress the lip, sneer, leer, and ogle with an alacrity which cannot fail of attracting notice, and, if supported by personal advantages, the deception is generally triumphant, predilection and credulity together acknowledging the claims thus irresistibly established, though without such adventitious aid to effect, the demonstrations in question do infinite execution upon the inexperienced. Yet upon a nearer acquaintance with these folks we have found them exceedingly flat and heavy ; they are the most accessible, but, when known, the most neglected people in the world. Their piquancy consists of little besides interjection, obstreperous detail, and trite raillery about caring for "number one," dancing days being over, the superiority of one live convalescent to half-a-dozen dead ones, rivals finding their level or

owing all their blessings to luck, &c. Without even the most ceremonious encouragement, they offend by their familiarity, they get at your soubriquet and circumstances as it were by instinct, attack you in public upon matters purely private, and do abuse the benign spirit of toleration so abominably that they are at last, from a superabundance of social qualities of the wrong kind, driven to solitude, emigration, demoralisation, or a radical reformation of their manners.

Sedateness has something very imposing about it, and probably more of permanent delusion is practised through this medium than the other ; for the vivacious mannerist has a laborious part to sustain, and sooner or later must be detected ; whereas, the sedate man enjoys a calm impunity ; he goes all the way upon trust ; and nothing but gratuitous inconsistency and infidelity to himself can compromise him : the very quality which ensures your favour exonerating him from rude scrutiny or better acquaintance.

It inspires the idea of solidity in its vastest sense. Yet your sedate man often is at heart a funny fellow, loves his joke like his bottle, but shames to indulge it before company. And it is a resource, too, of misadventurers of all degrees, who, after an eventful career of dalliance with the wheel of fortune, es-

saying everything by turns, and nothing long, from the sophistications of town to the equally congenial, when equally profitable, rusticities of the country, now guaging the gullibilities of capricious constituencies, rich widows, and spinsters, or that fastidious oracle 'the public at large'; attempting fruitless experiments upon the gratitude of a prosperous protégé or upon the virtue of patient faith in inordinate presentiment of better times; and anon, at a push, expiating their extravagances through the emollient process of insolvency, make one desperate effort, and merge their elasticity in the mysterious attitude of sedateness. Then do they stare and look callous, discard popular provocatives to joy and gladness, sport tooth-picks at a tragedy, wear black in the dog-days, read newspapers in a cricket-ground or obsolete books in an omnibus. They will cough to catch sympathy, are ostentatious in their charities, and affect taciturnity as a cloak to their ignorance. If you have intercourse with them, you will find them evasive and mysterious where they ought to have an opinion, and positive upon abstruse things evidently beyond the reach of their understanding. They walk with measured pace, and would have rectitude stamped upon their foreheads, not for the love they bear it, but for what it is supposed to propitiate. But thrown

off their guard, they show the cloven foot, are bashaws with the shopkeepers, have no creed but the "first law of nature," nourish a latent spite for persons of undisputed merit, and have been known to assault them when inflamed by indulgences to which they are secretly addicted.

The intense school must be mentioned with some reverence and reserve, as it comprehends many men of real genius and peculiar endowments; but it also includes a constellation of arrant impostors and triflers. It has been much encouraged by contact with foreigners, and in our plebeian circles much of the style which characterises it was introduced by those illustrious recipients of ambitious hospitality, the Spanish and Italian refugees. The exotic has also been imported by Englishmen, who go abroad on a trusty errand, are struck with the punchisms of Monsieur and Signor Don, and on their return home stagger mine host with their vivacity and confiscate the heart and dower of the too-susceptible Miss Kitty who had never travelled farther than Calais. In its indigenous growth, it pervades the circle of dogmatists, quacks, hobbyists, or smatterers in science, latitudinarians in morals, local dignitaries, and almost all conceited people. The dogmatist, with vehement emphasis, declares to Heaven—and he

wouldn't mind telling the authorities to their faces — that there never was a more disastrous error than such and such a truism, and that unborn generations will forget their distinctions of pedigree, or the progress of machinery, in the contemplation of the stupendous moral and intellectual darkness of the nineteenth century. More opinionative than patriotic, more forcible than profound, these men fly at high game, and, despising the humble sport of demolishing folly, injustice, and depravity, aspire to war with illustrious reputations, constitutions, fundamental principles, and imprescriptible rights ; and in prosecution of their empirical theories, would witness the desecration of the Temple of Liberty with as little compunction as the obliteration of White Conduit House, or the blowing up of a powder-magazine. Quacks deal in simplifications, systems, and specifics for the redress of every evil, acknowledge no mysteries, and pretend that the animal, man, is equal to any intellectual achievement which curiosity or human exigency may render instructive or desirable. Quickened by this inspiring philosophy, he commences unequal conflict with contemporaneous “prejudice,” exposes his shallowness by too voluble discourse, spoils his eyes by wearing spectacles, gets ruined by a blunder, and dies of an

ecstasy in an almshouse or a dungeon. It is but due, however, to this fraternity to state that, with all their eccentricities, they are distinguished by a politeness and an air of insincerity in the advocacy of their nostrums, which make as good a substitute for intelligence as a victim could desire. Hobbyists are miniature concentrations of the quack and dogmatist. Less bold and versatile, but equally inveterate,—nay, superstitious, they lead more peaceable lives, and quit the world more like reputable citizens than those oddities usually do. They adopt a caprice and swear by it, as their secular faith, or exponent of latent truth and hidden mystery. With some it is music, mysticism, antiquarianism, freemasonry, a name, diet, friction,—very entertaining things in their way; but not, as our hero would have it, to the disparagement of others quite as popular, and, if he would believe it, equally profound. It is a willing slavery, in the hope that something astounding may yet come of it. Practical latitudinarians are intense on occasion, and the world wonders what is the source of their inspiration, Lady Betty appropriating to herself all the credit of her innamorato's proficiency in the soft mysteries of flirtation. Local dignitaries belong to the intense school; they are self-impregnated, and possibly

dream more of themselves when digestion wavers, than any dyspeptical Malvolio. The *vivida vis* of the trustee or honorary official is a by-word, and no longer worthy the name of a phenomenon. Now, all these, and all conceited people, have generally something intense and striking in their exterior, which should excite suspicion in the judicious observer who is not ashamed to hesitate before pronouncing an opinion upon them; and the result is likely to reward him for his circumspection.

SENSIBILITY.

To ———

THE error against which you recently put forth a caution, namely, the confounding of sentiment with sensibility, is a very common one, and the manifestation of the latter in early youth is often regarded as a presage of future excellence. You well remarked, that sensibility was no more than the “dew of feeling.” It is so, I submit, of feeling generally. Unlike sentiment, sensibility is called forth, not only by occasions tender and mirthful, but may accompany every action of the mind comprehended in the categories of pleasure and pain. May I presume to draw your attention for a few moments to the sensibility of those who feel no tenderness for others, and whose mirth, where they have any, is of the cynical school? Kindness in them is all lavished upon themselves, and in this sense their benevolence is unbounded.

Character is early developed. Do we not remember in our school-days those little black sheep of the

fold—social anomalies—the morose, isolated, implacable creatures, who subscribed not to the freemasonry, nor joined in the general pastimes, and even discountenanced the festive revelries—epochs in the monotonous half-years—that helped to unite the young community in a bond of fraternization, and the memory of which forms one of the most pleasing features in the retrospection of boyhood? Their acerbities, I suspect, were not really unaccompanied with the “dew of feeling:” beneath the cold impracticable exterior at which our generous souls were scandalized, the recesses of their inmost spirits, laid bare to the microscopic eye, might have disclosed a busy scene in the sediment of that “dead pool of the heart” where virulent emotions were engendered, devices of animosity concocted, or visions of resentment indulged, against their unconscious foes, not with the malignity alone which belongs to the sullen and unsociable, but also with that *sensibility* which is incipient passion, and, uncontrolled in such minds, confounds the very faculty of deliberation and moral perception. We are accustomed to view with unmixed abhorrence the character of a coward. Who but a coward can conceive what are the workings of a mind under the influence of this passion, the *sensibility*—the very soul of cowardice—with which it tortures the

heart and the conscience? Shame, too, what sensibility is there, what bitter sympathy for self, not for violated honour or humanity, nor for the victims of artifice or the participators of disgrace, but for the self-condemned offender confronted at last with the terrors of retributive justice! Envy denotes displeasure at another's happiness: it is so, but by contrast, the original feeling being chagrin at the keen sense of destitution of which the sight of another's superiority is the most forcible reminder. Vanity—how sensitive is it! The sensibility of a mean spirit (and vanity is meanness) is none the less, that it is bestowed only on self. Leaving out of view “the thousand inconsistencies of man” to which you referred—as where one of the most eloquent of sentimentalists was defective in filial sympathy—do we not see men, defective enough in filial sympathy, who neither write, nor speak, nor feel sentimentally, and yet who when their vanity is wounded, display the acutest sensibility? Watch them on occasions when their importance in the world's eye is in jeopardy. With what appearances of strong feeling have we not seen a rich and a poor relative meet each other! From no other cause than the dissimilarity of their positions in life, and a deficiency in either of natural affection and manly pride, the sensation with which

their countenances glow is not that of genial pleasure, but one of *shame* mixed on the one side with awe, and on the other with ridicule and disdain. Revolting as this is, the sensibility in these cases is exquisite. I question if in the whole compass of emotion, from the sublimities of passion down to the rivalries of equipage and other meretricious display, the nervous system encounters a greater shock than in such collisions. Yet the "greater" man of these two (the other *may* be a sentimentalist), did it serve his purpose, would not scruple at the commission of a fashionable meanness. He compounds easily enough with his conscience, but preserves inviolate faith with the master of the ceremonies. He bestrides the waters of prosperity with a buoyant selfishness, deaf to the calls of charity and to the remonstrances of the feeble monitor within. From his old companions who cannot keep pace with him in his supererogatory gewgaws he exacts an increasing deference in return for the gracious continuance of his acquaintance and his mirthful contempt at their poverty. And yet this specimen will flutter, to his very heart-strings, aye, and "pipe his eye" at a whitebait dinner where his *virtues* are parodied by a sycophantical toastmaster; and he will lie awake o' nights frenzied with sensitive suspense previously to the balloting

at a club into which he is a candidate for admission. He is black-balled—and there I must beg to leave him. Vice, or meanness, centralizes the current, but does not counteract the growth or dry up the springs of sensibility. Charity sermons are addressed to the nobler feelings, and ought to operate powerfully upon the sentimental. The dry-eyed portion of a congregation, amongst whom that class may be respectfully included, are quite as likely to contribute handsomely as the more *sensitive*, for with the latter the amount of a donation has veritably been known to depend upon who should be the plate-holder, (an extravagant compliment to that functionary's perspicacity at the expense of his delicacy). So in an audience at a theatre, where do we witness the least indications of sensibility? *not* where there is the most immorality. The excitement here so anomalously displayed, often during violent scenes in a melodrama, no matter what the moral, argues not inconsistency: it is no more than indiscriminate maudlin sensibility, which plays without any correlative sentiment, the complement of an incoherent sympathy, the surviving capacity of emotion after the extinction of the moral principles with which sensibility may have once acted in concert, but had no commensurate affinity. If "silence is the perfectest herald of joy," the vulgar ensigns of sensibility

are blushes and tears. Now, who are the blushers? The modest fair? Say rather the bashful and the vain. The honest of the rougher sex? Ask the capitalist or the shrewd ecclesiastic what is to be said to the adult who blushes. The former will shake his head, and the latter, if the Rev. —— ——, will declare him to be literally without the pale. Honourable exceptions there are of course. Then for the tears. What does the melting mood in the favourable view of it imply so much as weakness? And how is not the accomplishment abused,—

“ If that the earth could teem with woman’s tears.”

The sensibility of artful people is cultivated to a degree incredible to the unsophisticated. Tears are shed naturally; but being observed to take effect, an exaggerated picture of the sympathy really excited is conjured by the imagination, which further subdues the sinister heart, and another gush is the consequence. These are crocodiles’ tears (the practice is common with young children), instigated in the early stage by a gentle duplicity, but made presently available to the basest ends, and often they do secure those ends when plied upon the sentimental and unwary. Of such are your weepers. Honourable exceptions here again, but they are few and far between.

Eccentric sensibility is more an error of head than of heart. I was once struck with an instance of it in a lamented and very unsentimental friend who was afflicted with a *penchant* for duelling. He was recounting to me the circumstances attendant on the death of his father, and entered into the description with a vivid force of detail. He was summoned in his turn to the bed-side of the dying man, and received from his own hands the bequest of a magnificent brace of pistols ! The parting benediction, and the melancholy scene of his parent's mortality, he described with much energy,—a rather sprightly enumeration of his virtues, and a not unostentatious one of the many distinguished individuals who graced the funeral obsequies. He delivered all this, I thought, with unseasonable animation, but when he adverted to the pistols, his voice faltered—the vibration of this eccentric chord awakened his filial sensibility. Captivating theme for speculation is chivalrous sensibility ; but my friend was a civilian ; and I hardly knew whether to smile or to moralize,—sympathy at the moment was out of the question.

It were well for the interests of society, if the attention of those intrusted with the guardianship of the rising generation were more frequently directed to those specious impediments to the progress of

civilization amongst which may be accounted the *sensibility* which consorts with the sordid and the vicious, —an insidious evil, baneful in its operation as overt unmitigated depravity, and the impunity of which materially contributes to make the world a very unsafe one for unsuspicious people to live in. Let them set less value, and not be deceived by names, upon the bare characteristic of sensibility *in the abstract*; or rather let them find in the discovery of it additional reason for a vigilant and rigid inculcation of high principles and feelings; for it assuredly is a temperament no more inimical to vice than to virtue : and such are the susceptibility, and the subtilty, and the disingenuousness of even the infant mind, and so incalculable the pretexts (undreamt-of in the tutor's philosophy) for rebellious antipathy and estrangement on the part of a pupil, especially an inapt student, that, upon the most trivial or imaginary provocation, pique, indolence, and falsehood, unless circumvented by the skilful hand, will, in the sheer spirit of impotent heroism, —which for the time is its own ample reward, —join issue with the hireling *sensibility* in a secret conspiracy of passive resistance to authority; and as a foil to the influences of such disaffection upon the character and destiny of the neglected youth, the

ordinary educational *régime* supplies little more than the promulgation of theories which are enforced but as exercises of the understanding, and an occasional didactic homily which is heard and criticised and speedily forgotten.

LIVELINESS.

THERE are four sorts of lively people—funny, loquacious, cheerful, and impudent.

Funny people are always popular with one class or other, and would be more generally esteemed than they are, but for the inadvertencies of converse and conduct, which seem to be necessities of their character, and that ungratefulness with which heavy folks regard their obligations to the humorist, who, without requiring more than an honest welcome and perpetual good will, fillips away their aches and pains, and beguiles them of their own utter tediousness. The due allowance is seldom made by the ethical faculty for the frailties incident to the humorous temperament. Extremes cohere. The wit has his hours of metaphysical abstraction, in which infinitesimal proof is dearer to his heart than the whimsical coruscations of fancy; and the poor humorist has *his* more sorrowful alternations, often quits the circle he had illuminated by his drollery, and through the slough of secret despondency trudges home to a sleep-

less pillow, from which he rises with aching head to ply the dreary drudgery of unprofitable duty, varying its monotony only with fitful conjectures as to the efficacy of his latest remonstrance with an inexorable creditor, or yearnings for a repetition of his last night's fatal hilarity. Such often is the condition of the humorist, struggle with his foibles as he may : but they find no extenuation with those who thrive upon his deterioration, and whose days he materially contributes to lengthen.

Loquacious people are neither entertaining, charming, nor offensive ; but are, nevertheless, not unacceptable in wet weather, or during the prevalence of influenza, as supernumeraries, where numbers may possibly run short ; being, at all events, more eligible contributors to social *éclat* than pompous insipidity or sullen ill-nature. They are of unexceptionable morals, respectable means, and not destitute of sterling active virtues ; but, somehow or other, they are not blessed with the tact to propitiate the hearts even of their most tolerant companions. They are early risers, moderate in appetite, have no wayward predilections for grave or gay, conventional or sectarian, poetical or political, sunlight or moonlight ; but they are people of their word, are kind to all about them, and are always " lively."

Well-bred cheerfulness is the perfect medium. Here we have intelligence without affectation, humour without folly, vivacity united with dignity, and fascination which never forfeits respect. Any one who can be lively after this fashion, may command the love and admiration of the world—and deserve it.

Let not those who are emulous of the reputation which some lively people enjoy, deceive themselves by thinking that animal spirits alone are sufficient to ensure it. To be popular in society, good spirits certainly are indispensable, as sensibility in a lover, honour in a gentleman, swiftness in a race-horse, or poverty in a rope-dancer; but there are other qualifications, let them be assured, positive and negative, without which their zeal will only disgust others and fatigue themselves in vain. Let them avoid equivocal, and devote the assiduity wasted in the manufacture of puns to observation of the tastes and mood of their company, that they may adapt and time their vivacity, and so secure the reward to which they think it entitled. Let them further avoid offensive raillery—such as complimenting a venerable lady upon her beauty; asking an expectant of brighter days what he has done with his phaeton; or a candidate for orders, whether he is very devout; or an unfortunate member of a large

family, who has been attacked with premonitory symptoms of apoplexy, whether he is the one who had had something the matter with his head ; or a nervous man, how are his nerves. If they *must* be pungent and severe, let them invert their rule of sport by selecting vice for a butt ; or if they *will* display their irony, let them do it with politeness, and rally those only whose inapposite excellences place them beyond the reach of offence. Otherwise let them eschew personality, most especially with their seniors ; and never *stare* at people, nor harbour rude thoughts of them in their presence (for *fear* the countenance should betray) ; nor even in Christian sympathy commiserate them under any circumstances to their faces. They have a keen eye for the peculiarities upon which they exercise their critical humour—suppose they open them a little wider, in conjunction with the eyes of their understandings, and try (nature will aid) to penetrate, and sympathise with, the *feelings* of others, taking their own, which they understand well enough, as an initiatory key to expound the new mysteries. If they do this, they will strike at the root of one obstacle to success in society—*impudence*.

ENTHUSIASM.

THE spirit of Enthusiasm is peculiar to nations and to individuals, but not to classes ; nor is it identified with any order of pursuit or degree of qualification for placing the object of it within reach of attainment. Like genius, it is independent of the restraints to which the cooler impulses of humanity are condemned to yield submission ; but, unlike that divine impulse, it is as indiscriminate in the selection of its idol as of its sanctuary, and not merely from the castle to the cabin, but from the sublime to the ridiculous, the Enthusiast need not be sought in vain. The drover ascends the mountain-top and walks forth the poet of nature. The veteran peer stands up at fisty-cuffs with the brawler in the sacred cause of altar, hearth, and throne. And the respectable middle man, averse from scenes of strife, and preferring not the din of heated crowds to the snug bosom of his family, will yet dare, in the election hall, to front the popular storm of laughter and imprecation,

and earn renown in avouching his passionate fidelity to opinion, at cost of penance in a torn coat, and giving proof of his prowess even in the rabble's den.

It has no choice of profession. The minister and the *tide-waiter*, the physiologist and the fiddler, the gladiator and the bookworm, the poet and the merchant, the sportsman and the beggar, the cook and the coachman, the philosopher and the veterinary surgeon, all and more than these, though motley to the view, and however alien in their several vocations, may nevertheless be united by a consanguinity—one generic touch of nature which proclaims them of a common kindred. The financier looks a very petrifaction when absorbed in his frigorific lucubrations, but in applying them or their results to the practical objects of his enthusiasm, may, in the transfiguration, pass for a provincial tragedian or a romantic *primo buffo*. The naturalist, punctilious in the assortment of his specimens and the preservation of his apparatus, yet when the volcanic spark is kindled and the heat is upon him, will, in the explosion of his enthusiasm, scatter, like lava, into disorder his infinite implements of illustration, and swamp at a blow the whole economy of his laboratory. Imagine a “tide-waiter,” *ex officio*, encompassed with the paraphernalia of ship-loading and cargo—“guaging,” with clasped

hands lauding the invisible power which yet gave him to gaze on the rainbow then irradiating the expanse immediately over the West India Docks! (witnessed, and cherished in curious recollection.) Did not obsolete "Charley" use to confess, in the energy with which he vociferated at intervals, his *ardentia verba*, touching the stars or the hour, or the meteorography of the night—"of other days"—that a more vital agency than the mere "*feeling* of his business" was requisite to preserve him from the *trance*-ient embraces of Morpheus? "There's *reason* in the roasting of eggs,"—but the hero of the spit will tell you, that he too owns to a yet warmer influence in the exercise of *his* art, elevating him far above the shallow epicures for whom he caters, and who, unable scientifically to embrace or confute his culinary theories, are content with the carnal honour of devouring or demolishing them in effigy. "Jarvie" needs no advocacy but the redundant eloquence of his countenance to attest the animating spirit within *him*. The sportsman—on a chance voyage, when the vessel has struck and all is given for lost—bewails the license of Fate that, handing him to the pilotage of Charon, denies him the reprieve of one *season* more; when, struck by the supernatural force of his despair, his heart of flint ignites, and he heaves im-

passioned farewells to his friends, human and canine. Nor doubt that the poor suppliant, grateful for the alms which in a needy hour enable him to appease the pang of hunger, or on a pitiless night to "stop a gap to keep the cold away," can invoke blessings on his benefactor with an enthusiasm as vivid as the sense of alleviation which human charity procures him.

Even in the very driest pursuits, or what we stigmatize as such, omnivorous enthusiasm can find its choicest aliment. See the old pilgrim, once the devotee, since experienced in care, and at length palled with a hard-earned but weary life of undignified ease, seeking refuge from satiety and a relumination of his dormant flame, in a posthumous ordeal of mathematics, rhapsodizing in a logarithm, or steaming in a hot-bed of cube-root. Or survey the records over which his supplementary heart delights to pore, and read his superscription to the title-page of a ponderous blue bulk of repulsive "Evidence" or Elucidation, *Here's food for meditation even to madness!*

The appreciation even of virtue (what worthier object of enthusiasm?) involves not its possession. A nondescript may have a more enthusiastic conception of glory than the hero of a hundred fights; and com-

mensurate in the same breast with the quick pulse of cowardice, may dwell the lively and hearty admiration of its opposite. Neither are the talent and the taste for a pursuit essentially concomitant; as the studio will prove in the case of your *impotent but enthusiastic* grappler with difficulty. Neither disappointment, nor monotony, nor disgust, would seem to have moderated his strange aspirations, nor dulled the edge of his fanatical husbandry. On he plods through fog and fire, a sensitive salamander, vowing he luxuriates where he only seems to rave, leading a life of congenial purgatory, and fulfilling his eccentric destiny under stimulus of a vague faith in the indestructibility of his passion, to which he dedicates every function of his sensorium and every pore in his body.

DISAGREEABLE PEOPLE.

FOR cultivating patience, there is nothing like the society of disagreeable people. The worst amongst them are the ill-tempered, afflicted with an instinct of nausea which acidulates the entire man, and gives him a morbid energy for cavilling at all visible and invisible things. Not a coat or a boot ever fitted him. His tradesmen all play him false, from a corporate grudge against him, the source of which it vexes him that he cannot divine. His domestic economy is all sixes and sevens—undiscovered crevices, conjectures of insecurity, impending dilapidations, and outbreaks of menial disloyalty, float in his exceptionous imagination with all the exuberance of utter fiction. He is a perpetual detector of flaws, and purveyor of grievances, but, devoid of system or principle for the better exercise of his function, he shoots beyond the mark, and rectifies nothing,—though devoting to the task more than mortal

assiduity. He is Mr. Killjoy; returns evil for good, scratches for smiles, ejections of wrath for tenders of affection, bellows a reproach but can only stammer a benediction—to which the amen sticks in his throat. His amiable moods are scarce as sturgeons, or tender beef-steaks. He has no faith in you, so beware his faculty of misinterpretation, for he mistakes *abandon* for vulgarity, suspects a double meaning when you record a fact, and a personal sneer where you are only trying for his soul's good to titillate his spleen, and clarify the murky atmosphere around him. He never *congratulates*; be your success what it may, he has never a word for you. He frets at an inadvertence, and bears a gross assault with more resignation than a trivial offence. There is no legislating for his case. His weapon of crimination is whetted in his own juices, and, all else failing, he will fetch a bone of contention from his own anatomy. Does the foul fiend possess him? or whence is all this? We know he is given to strange diet, and preys much upon potted meats, stewed crudities, negus, chocolate, and sour-krouts; but yet there's something more than natural about him, if philosophy or *surveillance* could but find it out.

On the other hand, there are some who are disagreeable from an excess of amiable feeling and good-

humour, which if not duly tempered with ^ediscretion offend like cant. They are too adhesive and dependent, with them virtue's vitality is endearment, they carry out *ad absurdum* the theory of fraternisation, and positively love their neighbours more than themselves. They will neglect their interest and reputation, compromise truth, and suffer indignity for your especial pleasure, shake hands inordinately, and aver themselves your hyper-affectionate friends, when all you require is that they behave themselves like sensible people. It is a sad truth, that constancy seldom accompanies this temperament. The mucilaginous heart congeals, or it consumes in its own heat—and its ashes are baleful. Again, good-humour is a snare and a nuisance, when indulged without moderation. The *jolly* club abjure all distinctions of time and occasion, would epigramize on a convict, parody the Decalogue, or sing at grave-making. Their perceptions of reality are thus obscured, life's phenomena whirl and whiz about their long ears, and its drama must be all carnival. They have the sense of enjoyment vivid but *neat*—they realise a perpetual glare—have no idea of contrasts—no perspective—imagination is absorbed in humour—the scene in which they move is flat but radiant, and this makes them happy ; forgetful, poor

things ! that they have no residue of oil for their lamps when these shall begin to flicker in the socket ; wherefore their decadence when it comes is dread and desolate. For they become toper ; and yet the toper has a *heart*. Aye, so large a one, that it invades the seat of conscience ; or so warm, that the modest temperature of reason cannot consist with it, and for the privileges of rational manhood alcohol is the universal succedaneum. He first loses his memory, and gets in lieu a quickened sense of hilarity,—laughs twice where he laughed once,—judgment then fails him —laughs thrice ; then temper—he laughs no more, but plucks up a spirit, whose fevered conflicts undermine the energies that remain. Disease grows by what it feeds on ; he becomes a pest, a disgrace, droops, *pines*, still hobnobbing, till death snuffs his candle.

Then there are the ill-mannered fraternality, some venial, yet all very disagreeable beings. To a *gentleman* with a bad cough, it may be left optional with him to come abroad or stay at home till he's cured. But stentorian chatterers, remorseless disputants and inexorable snorers, abound in places into which they ought not to be admissible. To receive an overture of civility with marked coldness, is not only ungrateful but cruel. Swearing in any company

aboveground ought to be made shameful. Staring should be looked to as a fault, excusable but in madmen or valetudinarians. A dull host has no right to call his friends about him. Fidgety bachelors are unpardonable. Love-couples, either before, or soon after marriage, are often disagreeable, treating all beside as supernumeraries without the magic ring that circumscribes their chaste mutualities ; they taunt, upbraid, recriminate, confess, and make it up with one another *ad nauseam* ! Contradiction, flat contradiction is loathsome ; individuals there are, who were never guilty of an act of unqualified acquiescence in their lives. Unseasonable allusions to private affairs—even the gratuitous mentioning of your dearest kindred to such as strangers to them are without invidiousness justified in not caring to hear about them—are barbarous. Lord Chesterfield has overlooked a little fault which may be mentioned with advantage. Many worthy persons have a habit in conversation, of looking at your nose, or other part of the face, instead of at your eyes, as though they were (and so they must be) partially employed in scanning your features, instead of appreciating your sagacity : and be the former ever so unexceptionable, the solecism is a very disagreeable one. The *vis-à-vis* is a delicacy. *Cutting* is an expedient foully abused,

but it is a whole art. Impudence is hardly worthy of mention, it has been pretty considerably starved down.

Neither should politeness be strained. - Indeed, extreme politeness is extensively known and abominated as a veil for contempt. But even with a respectful desire to please, beware of smiling ; and oh ! if you are a man of business, avoid the zoological airs of the *petit-maitre*, however you may have the best of the argument about the saltpetre, or the saw-dust, or the bill of exchange ; or Cruikshank is abroad, and you shall see yourself one day made a laughing-stock for Christmas vacations. And leave that eye-glass at home, or serve it as Will Honeycomb did his chronometer, rather than dangle it with you to the mart, and petrify the shade of Gresham with your grimaces, or the real old gentleman himself who is going to give you a turn in the Three per Cents, with your elastic bow *à la Française*, done as if upon springs, the rebound being more vigorous than the jerk. But let the staid and formal also who smile *not* and eschew as evil the semblance of emotion, with countenances sealed up for ever, bethink them — extremes are said to meet, still waters to be deepest. They will be suspected the less for approximating nearer to the happy medium.

Some are disagreeable by reason that they are so inscrutably *clever*, that there is positively no respecting oneself in their company — no getting a fair start with them. Their standards for everything are of enormous altitude. They mystify and set you at defiance, sacrifice truth to display, are better talkers than thinkers. They steer clear both of the wrong and right side of a question, and keep the STARTLING line; they depreciate things and authorities which we have been used to reverence, deride what we admire, and perhaps *because* we admire. They pronounce instead of submitting their judgment, and would quell an honest dissentient, as a rider a refractory steed, by literal gagging. They would unsettle you in everything, and there leave you. They are never ingenuous, and probably, if they were, would appear to have exchanged solidity for candour. They are satisfied with their reputation, joined with the delusive conviction that a short course of sobriety would place the whole ocean of truth navigable and penetrable before them.

Stupid people do often try the patience, not by their absolute stupidity, but by their rashness. There is no teaching them their place. They *will* discourse of great and divine things — as where Broadface talks about Byron being a devil of a

fellow, and Shakespeare a surprising or other sort of *fellow*, and of celebrated contemporaries as *trumps* ; or in other moods blurting his impertinences touching the hubbubs at Oxford, and the Exchequer office : slubbering politics by rote from the text of his rabid oracle who drinks his port and flatters his vanity, or speculating about the millennium as imperturbably as upon the prognostics of a weather almanac. And when these youths push themselves into undue influence, as they oftentimes do through the defective vigilance of those, many or few, who have the power of withholding it from them, they become from sheer pig-headedness, though they may be always unknowingly, oppressors of unacknowledged merit, and accessories of rogues and villains whose craft is equally beyond their discernment.

Ugly people we will say nothing about, nor handsome ones just now.

Boasters and liars are abominable : you may give them the lie in the face, deep as to the lungs, and they take it very quietly.

Of *proser*s there cannot be two opinions. Can these human tortoises be immortal ? Certain they have a smack of *eternity* about them. Their brain is like the digestive organs, in a state of continuous but

insensible action. Soporific souls ; is it not a lesson of patience to listen to their yarns ?

But there are disagreeable people whom we cannot exactly charge with any of the above peculiarities, nor with any indeed. What makes them disagreeable to us ? Antipathy. But what is it in them that creates the antipathy ? *Je ne sçais quoi.*

JOB'S COMFORTERS.

AN innocent sufferer from a recent commercial disaster, one of the consequences of my misfortune has been an extended acquaintance with the fraternity rejoicing in the title of "Job's comforters." I hardly know why *I* should pretend to instruct or entertain the public, who may be presumed to be as intelligent upon the subject of *character* as I can be, and consequently quite alive to the peculiarities of the uncomfortable cousins I am speaking of; so I will merely observe in apology for this intrusion that the subject has for me, in some degree, the attraction at least of novelty. 'Tis a cud which I am pleased for the nonce to chew.

Permit me to ask you, respected reader—but in all probability you have, at some time or other, had recourse to the counsel of active-minded bodies who, when called upon for the exercise of their function, exhibit a laudable interest proportionate to the exigencies of the occasion, but combine with it a com-

mensurate spirit of opposition to every possible view which your own ingenuity can devise for meeting such exigencies, and averting the crises which they may seem to bode. Their procedure appears to be, first, to enter with true melodramatic intensity into the case, professedly to understand its bearings, and valiantly to tackle its difficulties ; and then, *mirabile dictu!* to provide that, neither by hook nor by crook, nor by any other means or appliances, shall you sustain your point against them, and that, inch by inch, you be checked in your moves and foiled in your efforts, however *apropos* in themselves, and however desirable and interesting the end they are proposed to accomplish. *You* cannot condescend to yield rational conviction to oracular dogmatism ; your impenetrability is rebuked with martial energy ; so your comforter shrugs his shoulders, buttons his pockets, and leaves you.

For instance, a concatenation of events connected with any of the multifarious interests which flesh is heir to, brings about a juncture demanding the exercise of promptitude, judgment, and co-operation ; the immediate necessity is for a movement of one kind or other, and you see that, whichever course be adopted, a sacrifice must be made. The comforter arrives, punctually as the clock strikes, looks as neat as a

whistle and as cool as a cucumber. It is a congenial errand; determination is on his frontispiece; he mounts his intellectual spectacles, and plunges at once *in medias res*. The facts are arrayed at his bidding, and analysed with statistical precision; the niceties are probed, the contradictions reconciled, and the whole superficies of the case mastered with intuitive sagacity. As he warms into the engagement, he displays a tenacity, anxiety, and vehemence worthy the vitality of the cause; and in eliciting the data which are to influence his counsels, avails himself of ample occasion for the display of that species of courage especially available in "the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties." Your comforter's conformation and yours chance to be different, and so you happen to view matters in a different light from him. His characteristic inveteracy is abetted by a partial notion of your wrong-headedness, and the result is antagonism, sharp, untiring, and fierce. The force of your appeals adds strength to his resistance—your importunity increases his implacability; he is very sorry, but the fact is, he is having a "set-to" with himself, in which you are but tributary, and on the cat-and-mouse principle you get neutralised at last.

What a compound is this being! With everything to instigate to a practical appreciation of his abun-

dant opportunity for playing the honoured part of "guide, philosopher, and friend," and of earning the reputation, if not realising the luxury, of loving his neighbour as himself, he puts on the strong armour of combativeness, and surmounts it with the panoply of the champion. Your entire and perfect trust is invoked as with a trumpet-blast, you are prostrate beneath his glittering banner, and might so continue but for the too frequent application of the "bare bodkin," with which your comforter administers a quietus whenever you dare to insinuate such heresy as that your soul is your own, or that two opinions are better than one.

To those who are addicted to curious speculation, such as upon the conceivable number of angels capable of dancing simultaneously on the point of a needle—what may be the favourite recreations of oysters, and whether that sedentary animal really ever is crossed in love—or what the essential difference between a human jackanapes and a zoological monkey—to such inquirers I recommend the employment of a leisure night (the best time for meditation upon mysteries) in accounting for the undeniable fact that such a heartless thing as a Job's comforter, despite the elements and other potentialities, gets his blood to circulate sufficiently to make him your warm

friend, can perambulate the byways of this mortal life without further prejudice than that of intercepting the dews of heaven, whose descent might otherwise convert even the valley of humiliation into a fruitful spot, and can wear the painless aspect which the countenance is traditionally held to derive from the pure fountain of a good conscience—in fine, towards furnishing forth what solution he may of this psychological enigma, and pronouncing in which category of imaginable sinners our philosophy may dream of allocating that most unsurpassable of humbugs—a *Job's comforter*.

PARTICULAR PEOPLE.

SOME people, the bane of respectable society, are so very particular with everything and with everybody that their better qualities are altogether lost sight of. Two minutes' conversation with them is quite enough at a time if you would come off unscathed from the encounter ; and then the safest topic is the weather, or the Crystal Palace, as these lead to nothing personal or disputatious, which were dangerous staple in such company. It is hazardous at any time to ask *particular* people questions, or to smile to them with any approach to familiarity. Your best passport to their favour is ceremony and silence ; not an impenetrable, but a deferential silence, yielding them the initiative, and so exalting them in their own estimation, until pampered vanity warm them into something genial, and they draw in their prickly horns, and for the nonce pass muster. If you think to treat *particular* people as you do people in general, only try it. Where an average person answers your

question, a particular one vouchsafes only an evasion or toss of the head ; or if anything more explicit, it is curt, acrid, and warns you to desist. He flounces at you by anticipation, resents your most innocent misconceptions, leaves you abruptly and in dudgeon, rather than appreciate your joke or your candour ; and unless you be very particular, never forgives you for an unintentional offence as long as memory holds its seat. Therefore two minutes' conference is lengthened enough for such people. But to attest the utter impracticability of particular people, you should have dealing with them. No need to be *particular*—anything in the beaten way of friendship, business, or pleasure, will serve the purpose of developing their wondrous tenacity. A bargain, or a loan (not pecuniary), or an assignation, or a slight misunderstanding, either will do to magnetize your man, and bring you and his humour together in odious contact. There is literally *no* dealing with “particular” people from their demurring, contravening propensity and disposition. They are without catholicity or the spirit of amalgamation.

Their sensibilities are brittle, affections punctilious, sympathies intolerant, and even their very gratitude is statistical. They ought never to marry, nor indeed be permitted to mingle in multifarious life. They

ought, male and female, each to form a club and live together respectively in monastic exclusion for the term of their unnatural lives from intercourse with any, save their own *particular* community ; or, until sated of their *nice* way of life — with its counterpoise and crucible philosophy, its picnics of tid-bit and verjuice, the monotony of sex, and the dreadfulness of despair — they cry for quarter, or for better quarters, and promise, if received back again into the world, to waive their fractional moot points, live less to themselves, and not be so “ particular.”

THE WIGGINS'S MUSICAL PARTY.

AFTER many and repeated invitations and promises on either side, it was at length agreed, with my friend Tom Gossett, that Christmas of —— should not be suffered to pass without my paying a visit to his recently adopted domicile in the vicinity of that pretty village of E——, which those at all acquainted with the county of Devonshire can hardly fail to have visited. I had often looked forward with pleasure to this promised relaxation from the turmoil of professional life, and the grateful exchange of the exciting cares and responsibilities of business for the luxurious independence of a week's holiday in that delightful locality, combined with the additional enjoyment of the society of one of the most accomplished and amiable of men. Tom was one of my oldest and most intimate friends, and his wife was just the sort of person to make such a guest as myself happy and comfortable under her husband's roof.

The day at length arrived when I felt myself at liberty to take my departure, and, on the 23d of December, of the year above-mentioned, I had the satisfaction of presenting myself at the door of my good host, and was speedily confronted with the family party, consisting of no more, in fact, than my old friend, his wife, and a young person who was introduced to me as Tom's nephew.

"That lad," said Tom to me in a whisper, as he showed me to my apartment,—“that lad whom you saw in the drawing-room——”

“Your nephew?”

“Yes—he has, he has indeed——”

“What?”

“Genius!”

Well it's no worse, thought I; but was forthwith brought again under the infliction of my friend's mysterious revelations touching the singular endowments of his *protégé*. Too tired after my journey on the one hand, and too content with anticipating the grateful repose that awaited me on the other, to enter with any peculiar interest into the merits of this *rara avis*, my demonstrations were confined to the conventional style of response which a helpless spirit of resignation to the will of my interpreter alone could enable me to adopt.

We descended to the drawing-room, and were very soon summoned to dinner, during which ceremony I had an opportunity of observing, among other things, the characteristics of the youthful prodigy in behalf of whom my passive sympathies had already been enlisted by his admiring uncle. It was very soon observable, that one subject, and one alone, engaged the thoughts and feelings of this interesting scion. It was music—or rather the art of “fiddling,” with its concomitant pedantries. The boy was evidently a pet with his indulgent relatives, and they not only countenanced to excess his aspirations after the artistic excellence which he appeared to regard as the *summum bonum* of life, but were betrayed into the error too common with enthusiastic parents and guardians, of so far misinterpreting his promise as to confound the restlessness of undisciplined boyhood with the throes of incipient genius, and to view the pertinacious ardour with which he clung to his infatuation as evidence of undoubted inspiration. The consequence was that the most unrestrained license was accorded to this youth in the indulgence of his particular, or rather absorbing pursuit. As dinner advanced, I discovered that the scion, as we must call him, had been just imported into his present enviable quarters, in consequence of an invitation which had

been sent to my friend and his estimable partner by an inimitable couple residing in the vicinity, couched in the following terms :

“ MR. AND MRS. WIGGINS request the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Gossett's company at a musical *soirée*, on the 29th instant, at eight o'clock precisely.”

The invitation was accompanied by a private note from Mrs. Wiggins to the lady, which ran as follows :

“ MY DEAR MRS. GOSSETT,—You have often heard of our musical *soirées* ; you will now have an opportunity of appreciating them. We do not ask any but *musical* people, notwithstanding they are so few ; but I tell you candidly we shall this time surpass ourselves ; for the selection will not merely be of the most classical description, but the performers will all be very superior. Our great Kanteler is coming (this, however, amongst ourselves). By the by, would you like to bring your nephew with you ? I mean the one with such precocious musical talent. We shall be delighted to see him.

“ Believe me, yours sincerely,

“ LIZZY WIGGINS.”

Upon this hint it appears the prodigy was duly summoned, and as duly arrived, and such was the occasion of the young gentleman's presence within

the hospitable walls which had just received me as an inmate for at least six days to come.

I am thankful in being able to avow myself one of those persons who are so happily constituted as seldom to be enslaved or distracted by any predominating train of thought when in the society of others, and, consequently, was enabled at this moment to listen to the conversation which, by reason of the presence of the scion, bore chiefly on the all-absorbing topic of music. It will not be necessary to detail that conversation,—suffice it, that it embraced allusions which were new to me, and appeared to possess little interest for one of the uninitiated. Of course, having been tolerably familiarized with the formulæ of ordinary society, and of musical entertainments in the metropolis, I had heard about Mozart and Beethoven, *cum multis aliis* of the same illustrious fraternity,—in fact, possess a fair average acquaintance with matters musical, so far as they are expounded by our popular caterers to the requirements of a superficial public, have a tolerable ear, can join in a chorus, and have experienced the legitimate unbiassed sensations on listening to the infelicities of a bad vocalist or fiddler, although not identifying the cause of such sensation with the analytic skill of a connoisseur. But the technicalities connected with composition,

and the paraphernalia of the concert-room, the strange investiture of the choice passages with a meaning and intelligence which I had not only never been guilty of imputing, but had never before heard imputed, to those respectable phenomena, the contrarieties of taste, and the heating discussions and dissensions arising therefrom, and above all—But this is anticipating.

The day arrived—the evening approached. I, of course, was to be one of the party. Tom was unusually erratic; his wife was equally unsettled, and the scion was like a ball of wildfire. Of necessity, everything went wrong during the day; there was an utter suspension of domestic routine; the ceremony of breakfast lasted, with sundry intermissions, upwards of two hours; dinner was a perfect farce,—in fact, I was an isolated being, and thrown upon my own resources during the entire day. At seven o'clock we were summoned by the appearance at the door of a snug vehicle, which was exactly large enough to hold four, and then off we were whirled to the cottage of the renowned Wigginses.

“Mr. and Mrs. Gossett,” proclaimed the servant, and in we all walked into a spacious room, presenting a collection of neat and respectable-looking individuals, some of whose appearance may be cursorily described.

Our valued host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Wiggins, claim precedence in this enumeration. Wiggins was a round, shortish, florid, smiling, nice old fellow, presenting an exterior of almost professional respectability, comprising the characteristic blackness and whiteness, and tightness and cleanness, with, in addition, an amiable and shining naturalness, individually and particularly his own. The temperament of our friend was of the most genial description, presenting an attractiveness which only the most unaffected simplicity of character, and the most exuberant goodness of heart, can, with other minor combinations, secure. His fault was that he was an amateur violin-player.

Mrs. Wiggins was one of those persons who please everybody,—in fact, just the sort of character that her husband deserved as a wife. Like him, she had devoted herself assiduously to the cultivation of musical art, and was, as may be supposed, to officiate as the pianiste of this eventful evening. Mrs. Wiggins was stout, but winning.

The *salon* was arranged with all the needful appliances for an amateur concert. The pianoforte was turned inside out, and was surrounded by a number of musical desks, garnished each with wax-candles, and a chair attached, upon or against which lay or

stood a musical instrument of one description or other, together comprising violins of the required different sizes, flutes, clarionet, &c. The first thing the scion did, on entering the room, was to go and fumble about among the fiddles: he flew to them with instinctive impetuosity, and was soon imbedded in the little orchestra. The party further consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Simpson, the former tall, thin, and intellectual; the latter an animated pincushion in appearance, but possessing, as Mrs. Wiggins informed my friends, "great soul." Mr. Simpson was to take the second violin. Major Starkie and his daughter next presented themselves: the major was one of those benevolent people who are always forward to impart edification to all sorts of their fellow-creatures, and, without pretending himself to be a performer, made up for the deficiency by extemporising verbally and volubly upon the subject uppermost in the general mind upon this occasion: "instructor-general" was written on his brow, and with the manner of a gentleman and the heart of a wiseacre, he took me aside, soon after the introduction, and conferred some oracular communications which I was conscientiously bound to respect, inasmuch as they were upon the various points referred to corroborative of the stereotyped dogmas of the day. His daughter

was a perfect specimen of the English lady,—quiet, graceful, observant, and conversible, and evidently qualified to enjoy to its utmost extent the intellectual repast in store for us.

Mrs. Wiggins was indefatigable in dispensing the needful *agréments* among her guests, especially to our party, to whom she was remarkably solicitous in conveying an adequate appreciation of the several personages assembled. Mr. Wiggins himself had enough to do in superintending the order of the entertainments. Our revered host was to be the Viola of the evening: the violoncello was undertaken by Mr. Scott Bell, and the flute by Mr. Pinkerton.

The general attention was directed to the performers, all of whom, however, were in a state of suspense and uneasiness in consequence of the non-appearance of the first violin, Mr. Kanteler, the most important character. At length, after some considerable delay, the lion of the evening was announced, and in walked the great Kanteler. His entrance was the signal for general recognition, and he was at once hailed as the central functionary of the musical circle. He was a spare, middle-sized man, with great apparent elaboration of costume. His head was well shaped, visage thin—hair the same—rather pock-marked, large goggle eyes,

the merest modicum of languid whisker, underhung mouth, long chin ; and “ the inheritor himself,” encompassed in a blue coat with brass buttons, protecting an embroidered waistcoat, and an interior confluence of costly embellishment in quality of studs, chains, and divers intricate appendages, betokening the eccentricity of taste which usually marks the provincial lion : his lower proportions, which, under the restrictive authority of modern fashion were denied the privilege of illustrating the gentleman’s taste in decorative art, were, nevertheless, punctilio itself ; and his cravat was a perfect picture—white, inflexible, and of uncompromising depth, and consequently height, to the extent of invading the lower extremities of his ears, each of which curled up from the encroachment with an effect entirely unique. His most remarkable peculiarity, however, was the breadth and prominence of his wristbands, which bore undeniable evidence to the daring inveteracy with which he had equipped himself for the all-important rôle assigned to him by his devoted compeers. He walked up to Mrs. Wiggins, and seated himself beside her, when a series of whispering mutualities ensued, marked by irrepressible emphasis and anxiety on the one part, and the most imperturbable and dignified coolness on the other. As the lady poured into his

ears the burthen of all her secret solitudes at that critical moment, and as the depth of feeling with which her musical soul was preparing to be agitated was apparent in the gentle undulations of her respected breast, the great Kanteler maintained the immoveable aspect which he wore on first entering the room. At the termination of this portentous *tête-à-tête*, Major Starkie walked up to the accomplished man, and addressed him in a delightful tone of confraternity, which Kanteler returned with the same stolid serenity as before. The Major indulged his propensity to impart knowledge in his interview with Kanteler, not to the extent of presuming to offer anything acceptable to the latter in the way of connoisseurship, which would, in all probability, have been received with withering disdain, but contented himself with at once asserting his originality, and exempting the lion from any wound to his vanity, by simply discoursing to him on the subject of some newly-imported fiddlestrings, which a friend of his had, as cigar-smokers often confess to you, just obtained with great difficulty and by very particular favour. The Major's daughter then accosted Kanteler, upon which the latter rose, and a similar abortive attempt on the part of that lady was made to "draw him out." The mind was evidently pre-occupied ;

and a quiet signal from Mr. Wiggins withdrew him to the orchestra, where he was forthwith installed as leader. Whereupon commenced the tuning business, introduced with a series of whimprings and gruntings of the short duration desirable by reason of the extreme agony they appeared to express, and assimilating at last to what might be expected from a chorus of guinea-pigs trying to get up a rational conversation. The word was given by the scion, who stood behind Kanteler for the purpose of turning over the leaves of the "master" as occasion required.

The first burst was the signal for the dearest silence among the audience, and the most lively noisiness on the part of the performers. It was the first out-and-out thing of the kind I had ever witnessed, and I must in candour avow that the effect of the first piece was to excite me irresistibly to laughter : especially as the constant pattering of the digital department, with its graduated tones, first from the first violin, with its intermittent scream, then from his junior brother the second violin, then with the sonorous accents of uncle tenor (Wiggins), and capped by the climax of old grandfather grumbletonian, whose freaks of ponderous agility had the effect of representing the violoncello, to my unpractised observation, as one of the funniest old fellows I had ever

met with. The performers seemed, I thought, all to understand each other, and managed to inspire the audience, at least, with a due sense of the untiring perseverance displayed by the composer in chasing an idea in a circle whenever he got hold of one. The finale to the first quintette went off with exceedingly audible *éclat*, and the performers, one and all (excepting the leader), looked pretty considerably burnished up by their exertions. Mr. Wiggins smoothed his glowing frontispiece, and looked for all the world like a good boy who had had a pommelling and felt the better for it; there was a happy, tearful expression which implied exultation at having confronted danger, and joy at having honourably escaped from it: he looked first at Kanteler and smiled, but that obdurate hero was sympathy-proof still. The look went round to the others, and was by them congenially met, especially by Pinkerton, who feeling very proud of what he had himself achieved, indulged in a self-eulogy in shape of a hearty panegyric on the efficiency pretended to have been displayed by the benign Wiggins. Upon scrutinizing further, it was apparent that the harmony of the entertainment was not altogether free from alloy. Mr. Simpson, the second violin, somehow or other, in his executive capacity, had had the misfortune to forfeit the con-

fidence of Kanteler ; the melancholy fact was evinced by the peculiar flush visible on Simpson's cheek. Unlike the glow of honourable acquittal which garnished the countenances of the others, it clearly evidenced that consuming feeling of heat which a sense of shame produces : he attempted to speak to the leader, but a guilty falter impeded every effort ; whilst, on the other hand, the offended chief kept him inexorably at bay. An interval then followed, during which some low-toned intercommunications passed among the amateurs, and some casual interchanges of opinion among the rest of the party. The flute went and sat by his sister, an unmarried-looking lady, whose first impression on an ordinary mind would be 'twere best to have nothing to do with her, but who, nevertheless, improved on acquaintance ; for I found in her conversation more than I had given her credit for, both of amiability and intelligence. I was altogether the better for my colloquy with her, as it certainly relieved in me a sort of painful feeling of incapacity to appreciate the performances of the evening as they might deserve ; a feeling which has, doubtless, often been experienced by others similarly situated to myself.

The next performance was a duet between Pinkerton and Mrs. Wiggins. The lady took her seat

at the piano, the scion stood at her right, Mrs. Simpson (the great soul) at her left, and the shepherd in the background with his solitary pipe. The piece consisted of a splashing introduction, which seemed to illustrate a game of blindman's-buff set to music, the one groping after something and never catching anything, accompanied by a din and clamour from the other, productive of that sort of harmony called "singing in the ears," which went far to excuse the ineffectiveness of the struggling Mr. P., resulting from such very noisy co-operation. Nevertheless, *some* more significant impression was produced. Mrs. Simpson, during "the slow movement," as it was called, made a slow movement with her head from ear to ear, and looked like a person in all the ecstasies of weeping without the indecorous intrusion of a tear, forcibly illustrating the sentiment that

"To some, the meanest flute that blows
Gives thoughts that lie almost too deep for tears."

The scion went fiercely to work with turning over the leaves, and conducted that operation with a singleness of purpose gracefully tempered with an affecting gurgle or two wherever the finer emotions were appealed to. Major Starkie, too, found something in the performance to be excited about, and

showers of compliments were lavished upon both artists at the conclusion. Mr. Wiggins looked nicer now than ever ; his general pleasing expression gaining the accession of a new charm indicating the conjugal pride which he felt at witnessing the success achieved by his wife, and the warm acknowledgment which it secured. Nothing particular occurred until the subsequent performance ; the only thing that excited my notice being the frequent furtive glances cast at Kanteler by the disgraced Simpson, who looked so very much as if he couldn't help it, that I really couldn't help looking very much at the cruel oppressor, hoping, by the fixedness of my gaze, and what I flattered myself to be the severity of my frown, to elicit from him something like an indication of remorse for the inhumanity he had exhibited,—but no, the stern heart was impenetrable.

The next invocation was the scion on the violin. This outpouring presented the concentrated essence of the young genius's moral, intellectual, and sentient energies. The mechanical faculties of the brain, the sympathy, such as it was, which essayed to interpret the train of thought or strain of rhapsody, or combination of both, or of neither, such as they might be,—the fervour of youthful ambition—the misgiving intensity of the tyro—were all and each displayed

here in the full tide of operation. My friend Gossett and his wife were, of couse, charmed ; and, so far as the plaudits of the general company could contribute, the scion's success was complete ; but a smile from Kanteler would have transcended them all—one kind look, one encouraging glance from the icy autocrat, would have “outweighed” a “whole theatre of others.” The youngster was standing in a misty state of involuntary self-gratulation by Major Starkie, who happened to be speaking to Kanteler and said, “That youngster *can* play.” “No, he can't,” was the answer, “and never will. See,” added he, with crushing contempt, “see how he places his thumb upon the neck.” Unhappily the youth overheard this ; the consequence was, he was a piping ninepin for the evening. No more turning over leaves for Kanteler—

“No more his soul a charm in fiddling finds,
Fiddling hath charms alone for peaceful minds.”

To relieve his bursting heart, he imparted this to Simpson, to whom it afforded evident relief. Companionship in sorrow at once elicits and destroys the power of suffering : Simpson's growing vindictiveness towards his persecutor assumed a less selfish character ; he forgot his own ignominy in his friend's, and from

being the victim of Kanteler he had now risen to be the champion of the scion. The performances proceeded, and instead of producing that enjoyment which is, or should be, the object of such assemblages, it was evident that disappointments, frustrations, indignities, wanton opposition, "faint praise," and other acrimonious niceties, too numerous to specify, were here invading the musical *sanctum* to the destruction of that harmony which in a social *réunion* ought always to exist ; more especially where the pretensions are really all of one class, as on this occasion ; for, as I learned from Miss Pinkerton, in a second interchange of ideas, just before the finale, this Kanteler was, as a violin-player, *very much below mediocrity!* He possessed, it appeared, great flexibility, and could do some of the most "difficult tricks" on the instrument. He could make a great noise in lieu of extracting a fine tone, finger with rapidity, but not with articulateness, could stop in time but not in tune, and could distinguish between the *adagio* and *allegro* better than between the sublime and the ridiculous, minute not comprehensive, precise without soul or imagination, his interpretation of the effusions of a composer worthy of better celebration might without disparagement be compared to the far-famed poulterer's description of the phoenix, "It was green and yellow,

red and blue. He did not let us off for a single feather."

By the time we sat down to supper I was fairly beaten. We had been for four mortal hours listening, as I at last gathered, to villanously bad music, compelled to sit still and not speak a word, excepting at lucid intervals; witness the very inharmonious exhibitions of jealousy, temper, and pride, which had so sadly marred what I had anticipated as a scene of rare enjoyment,—and all for what? For the indulgence (so I reasoned), for the indulgence of a mania which is unprofitable enough when confined to the infected few, but when regarded in connexion with the silent sufferings of thousands of unwilling votaries, such as I was at this Wiggins's musical party, may be emphatically pronounced to be a grievance and a pest.

At supper, however, I at last came out, and glad enough to do it, pent up as I had been all the evening. "Throw music to the dogs," was the irresistible impulse; and we went to 't like French falconers. The laugh went round, and only halted when it came to Kanteler, who was a sort of thin Dombey, sustained in his infamous supremacy, not by any inherent merit in himself, but by the blindness of his devotees, by the confounded infatuation of those deluded ama-

teurs,—“ Were there no stones in heaven but what serve for the thunder ? ” My utmost ingenuity was taxed, and severely ; but I hit at last on an expedient which succeeded in mollifying the austerities of this little emperor. Miss Starkie, the Major's daughter, was, as I have before indicated, a charming woman ; she sat on my right : Miss Pinkerton, my sometime *confidante*, on the left ; the latter hinted to me that Kanteler was, beneath his waistcoat, a great admirer of the other lady. I soon ascertained that my fair neighbour on my right was of opinion with myself that Kanteler deserved to be eminently gibbeted for his aristocratic, unkind demeanour towards his satellites that evening. Through the infallible aid of champagne, under my most prudential administration, and the most skilful performance of the kind on the part of Miss Starkie, “ ever witnessed on any stage,” the result was the gradual conversion of a stone idol, or a Tussaud figure, into a *man*. Female influence had at length succeeded in probing the breast which the strains of melody had never softened, and in awakening the solitary chord which it appeared was only accessible to the magical finger of Miss Starkie ; to say nothing of the Bacchanalianism to which Mr. Kanteler had been subjected through my instrumentality, the efficacy of which, if such there

were, was, at all events, greatly subordinate to that more spiritual agency under which our Malvolio redivivus exhibited himself in mind, though not in stockings, as the abject slave of a merciful, but mischief-loving woman.

“At the *conversazione*?” whispered Kanteler, as he handed his innamorata into her carriage.

“Yes,” answered the lady.

“*Au revoir*,” minced the melting swain with ineffable grace, as the window drew up, and the enchantress drove off.

The party then dispersed. I mounted the box with a dreadnought which dear old Wiggins *would* lend me—had one of those choice cigars obtained with great difficulty, and by very particular favour—and the last thing remembered, as my willing head sought forgetfulness on the grateful pillow, was a *rifacimiento* of confused maxims, ending with

“Sermons in stones, and good in everything,”

when off I went like a top, and never awoke until half past ten the next day, in the course of which, by the by, I had the gratification of receiving an invitation to Mrs. Wiggins's approaching *conversazione*.

OSTENTATION.

OSTENTATION is the effervescence of vanity. Vulgarly it flourishes through the media of mansions, equipage, dress, and such symbols of wealth and power, for the which our votary may consent to the turning of his wits the seamy side without, and presenting to a scandalised world the spectacle of one whose secret passion is display, and secret practice pinching parsimony ; who will mortify his own to pamper his horse-flesh, and can even, under stress of fortune, not to speak profanely, stoop to strange contacts, under the gaberdine of vicarious ostentation. His lavish expenditure is not disguised ; but his economical shifts are “ stuff o’ the conscience,” and he would have them sacred as his thoughts from the world’s penetration. Occasionally, however, they are detected, which puts him upon contrivances, and may contribute to give a subtler character to his science of display, in which case he indulges it covertly and by stratagem, ensnares rather than compels your homage, subdues

your credulity through your curiosity, and captivates your suffrage through the more intricate mazes of sinister imposture ; he ceases to appear as an agent, and, like the invisible spirit of the Fantoccini, disposes his materials and conducts his operations without implicating himself as their director. In conversation he favours topics least likely to be familiar to his company, discussing politics with the juvenile, philosophy with the imbecile, mysticism with the mechanic, and equity law with a fiddler ; with the recluse or the valetudinarian he dilates upon the pleasures, and with the *roué* or the humorist upon the stern realities, of life. He is ingenious in the disposition of visiting-cards upon his mantel-piece, especially such as have addresses on them—nay, he has walked out of his way to get a respectable postmark to the envelope of his letter, rather than incur unworthy suspicion as to the place of his residence. His *casual* encounters with more considerable persons than himself are frequently *premeditated*; and on being accosted by an inferior, he resents the humiliation by an extortionate tax on his envy or admiration, through the medium of false inuendo or exaggeration. His cordiality *en passant* with a pedestrian acquaintance, depends upon whether himself be on foot, or on horseback, or in vehicle, adapted to each and all of

which contingencies he has a graduated scale of salutation ; indeed so various is the influence of such trivialities on his social temperament, that his demeanour towards an individual equally innocent and unconscious of any inequality of merit in himself to account for the waywardness of his friend, exposes our hero to the imputation of the most antithetical qualities which can be conceived to co-exist in the same being : good fellow and bashaw, mild and repulsive, cold and warm-blooded—according to circumstances. Tired of his game, finesse at length gives place to a method of self-exaltation, still further in principle removed from the primitive one of broad display, namely, a purely negative mode—aggrandisement through the disparagement of others. His one province and talent is universal contempt. The process of decomposition has reduced him to the level of a mere detractor. Heaven remodel him.

CONCEITED PEOPLE.

THEY seem to labour unwittingly under a comfortable derangement of their moral and intellectual system. Medical analysis might trace it to the hypochondriacal organ. Their countenances are intelligent and vivid, but stamped with an expression of insincerity, and have the peculiarities indicated by the epithets *sinister* and *priggish*. They have usually small eyes. They are not prepossessing, yet they attract; they inspire at first view a deferential antipathy, and on nearer acquaintance are found to be a compound of inconsistencies, of sensibility and impudence—decorous but vulgar, imaginative but punctilious, charitable but given to detraction, companionable but—offensive! They snub and sympathise in a breath, and distinguish themselves in conversation by eccentricities of phrase, inflection, and emphasis, garnished with a compliment of inexplicable gesture, “most tolerable and not to be endured.”

“If ignorance is bliss, ’tis folly to be wise.” We quote reverently, but is not this fallacy, or “has the time given it proof?” Is the bliss of ignorance *permanent*, and does not the pleasure of wisdom (not denied in the assertion of its folly) consist equally in the labour and results of its acquisition, exemption from both which constitute the bliss of ignorance? Without subscribing to this dictum of a philosopher, who, however impartial, knew more of the value of wisdom than of the pleasures of ignorance, we may venture to assert, that whatever of truth there be in the hypothesis, it is most especially exemplified in the case of a *conceited person*. His conceit is unquestionably the offspring of “ignorance,” and were to him the source of “bliss” inexhaustible, could he but abide in the delicious mental darkness unmolested, and perpetuate the hallucination of which he is the source and the subject without, alas! becoming its victim. Vital conceit is, while it lasts, the most independent, the most spiritual, and the most consolatory human frailty that ever assumed the prerogative of imparting happiness to its votary. It is independent of the mortifications which conscience and common sense delight to inflict upon pride and infatuation, and of the laws which declare the award of admiration, not justified by merit,

to be a prostitution of patronage supplied by the social polity for the encouragement of virtue ; it is spiritual, for the senses have no connexion with the sources of its inspiration—indeed, sensuality is the bane of conceit, and your *bon-vivant* is a humble soul compared with the “evangelical peacock” who fasts with a false motive ; and it is consolatory, because the conceited man carries within his breast a panacea which lightens his short afflictions, blunts the edge of enmity, and arms him against every shaft from the quiver of “outrageous fortune”—excepting the one final fatal barbed arrow of detection and contempt. Collision may confound, discomfiture may depress, scorn may abash, for a moment—but ere the principle of conceit can be radically destroyed, it has an elasticity and power of resuscitation without parallel in the purely animal economy ; its extinction cannot be effected at a blow, it is death-proof until worn out by time or service, but in either case it is long-leased, and constitutes more than any one attribute of a man, his true moral identity. It is all-sufficient as a *substitute*—and here one might almost be tempted to regard it as a virtue. The eradication of a bad habit is best effected on the principle of barter—not by mere amputation, but upon the more equitable system of exchange—replenishing the void left by penitent

abstinence. A conceited man is at no loss for a substitute on such occasions—he may forego a deleterious indulgence, and find ample remuneration in his own complacent self-recognition and approval. Conceit is his Muse—professional, domestic, and romantic; prolific in his uxorious embrace of joys to him unspeakable, incomparable, and, he falsely hopes, interminable. Ennui does not supplant it; disgust at the hollowness of the world, contempt for its vanities, the pangs of mortal love, the whispers of conscience, and other alloys which *meek* flesh is heir to, and which in other men operate at times as a sedative to their ardour, and suspend at intervals the sway of passion and the very sense of its existence, have no such paralysing influence upon the conceited man, whose ministering star twinkles for him continuously through all the varieties of temperature, season, and circumstance, and, as it were, holds his very destiny in abeyance unto the period of its final consummation. Solitude, which to the frivolous is death, and with the sage helps to expound the vanity of all things, in one sense even of wisdom, for him only vivifies the introverted current of his meditation on the glorious phenomenon of self. Society, where others meet with competitions and lessons of humility, serves only to inflame his self-idolatry; if an opponent beats him

in an argument, he falls to a secret disparagement of his morals—worsted in a skirmish of wit, he still contemns his adversary upon false postulates and hypotheses, ever available to his sophistical fancy. Success through its medium brings him inordinate self-gratulation ; miscarriage finds in it his surest alleviation. Combined with the respectability which a smack of honour and a modicum of conscience may confer, it is almost invincible, but without those accessories it more than mitigates the corrosions of occasional hopeless emulation. It is a retreat for the unconscious imbecile, a sumptuous asylum for the pretender, a temporary refuge for the delirious outcast. It is not “exclusive,” though consorting chiefly with the corruptible. It is as pernicious to the mind as “easy virtue” to the heart. It is an amorous misanthropy. Its seat is in the imagination, where it reigns supreme, not by destroying the other springs of mental action, but by perverting and subduing them all unto itself. The illusion, while it lasts, is rife of pleasures, which, like those of youth, though tainted by folly and succeeded by remorse, are not only exquisite in the enjoyment, but leave a flavour on the palate which gives them a reversionary relish even in the retrospection. But the disenchantment is inevitable, and the wisdom it should

confer is often at best a painful wisdom, and the reluctant convert remembers that *his* "ignorance" was "bliss," and scarcely hopes to discover aught but folly in the enlightenment which is at length forced upon him.

Of such are some of the elements of the "bliss" of ignorance.

THE LORD MAYOR'S DINNER.

THE Lord Mayor and Sheriffs having presented their compliments and requested the honour of my company to dinner at Guildhall on the Ninth of November, 18—, I availed myself with pleasure of the invitation, and presented myself and my card at the door at five o'clock in the evening of that day, and after being duly intercepted and inspected by a few vigilant individuals, with wands, sashes, and kid gloves, at the threshold, was at length permitted to pass the barrier which excluded the promiscuous population of London from the scene of the approaching festivity.

Gorgeous was the sight that broke on my astonished gaze—and strange the feelings awakened by the scene! The old edifice, with its gigantic roof, and marble monuments, and stately columns, was now illuminated with theatrical brilliancy,—crimson drapery of newest manufacture, relieved the cold architecture of the walls,—the effigies of departed heroes were shaded by silken banners, and this

ancient municipal temple seemed "for this night only" to be tricked out in all the paraphernalia of civic jubilee and display.

At six o'clock a signal was given to the company to be seated, and a band of music stationed in a gallery erected at the bottom of the hall struck up one of its grandest marches, when the pageantry of the day closed with a procession round the hall, headed by the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, and graced by the late Lord Mayor, the aldermen, the chief officers of the Corporation, and the distinguished visitors invited to the banquet—including her Majesty's ministers, the judges, and the foreign ambassadors,—and each bearing a lady on his arm. The distinguished visitors did not talk as they passed, and appeared conscious of nothing so much as that all eyes were upon them, and that justice would be done them according to their respective merits, and the particular prejudices of the spectators. Arrived at the grand table at the top of the hall, the Lord Mayor and his guests took their seats, and preliminary formalities being ended, another signal was given for dinner to commence.

The sensation communicated to the company by the presence of the great with whom they were for the nonce associated, was now succeeded by one of a

less intellectual character. One universal feeling of hunger pervaded the whole assembly. Each had his part to play, and was enabled, by that best of qualifications, a good appetite, to play it to perfection. One alloy to carnal bliss there certainly was, and that was the unhappy temperature of the turtle, which was only indifferently *warm*! But with this single exception everything was good, and every one seemed inclined to think so. With vigour and celerity the citizens now entered on the pleasing avocation which had called them together. The band of music kept continually playing popular airs, and, with the clatter of plates and dishes, the buzz of conversation, and the bustle of the waiters, gave unceasing animation to the scene. In the centre of the hall, over the entrance-door, was a gallery filled with strangers, who, it was hoped, had had *their* dinners; and at the grand end above the principal table was another, containing particular friends of the Lord Mayor, too poorly or too young to attend the dinner. On each side of the hall, upon pedestals, stood two men in armour, who from the gravity of their deportment, and the absence of anything like speculation in their eyes, were universally understood to be effigies; but, close to them, upon either side, were two round tables, standing many feet above the heads of the

people, on each of which, covered with a white tablecloth, rested a huge family joint of Brobdignag dimensions, presided over by a respectable-looking individual, in plain clothes, who proved that *he* was no effigy, by keeping continually carving the said family joint, with a pertinacity as though he had been brought *up* to it (which he had been), and had sworn to go on carving until he came to the end of it, truly amazing.

The "joints" in question were the famous barons of beef; they formed the most substantial ingredient of the feast, and the most conspicuous objects in the hall; and the very energetical gentlemen whose happiness it was to fill the high office of carving them, acquitted themselves with credit and *éclat*. Being such prominent objects of attention, of course it came to the knowledge of every one that those were the barons of beef,—and then the ladies and gentlemen, curious in culinary lore, and superstitious even in such *trifles*, fancied that there must be something especially appropriate in tasting some of the baron—which accordingly they desired to do. One gentleman, who had ordered a plate of "the baron," whispered me in confidence, but did not wish it to go any further, that *he* had tasted it in order just to say that he *had* tasted it, but he found it *very* indifferent;

—but others, who were less fastidious, managed to get through *their* quantum, by way of laying a foundation, as they said, for the after courses.

Smoking turkeys are put upon the tables, and people wish they had not taken the baron. Pheasants follow, and then partridges and pullets, and comestibles of all and every seasonable variety. The champagne is now made to fly, and careless gentlemen pretend they can't find their wine-glasses, and so, to save time, offer to take theirs in tumblers. Here and there, perhaps, delicate-looking persons may refuse to partake of the sparkling beverage, declaring they would rather "stick to their sherry,"—but there is little resisting the vortex of such conviviality as that of the Lord Mayor's Dinner—the waiter, having no time to lose, seems to threaten to fill your glass or pour the wine into your lap, so take it you must, the music seems to send it down, and the gentle exhilaration it conveys obliterates all power of remorse. One gentleman, more strongly excited than the rest, somehow seems always to have a bottle of champagne in his hand; two or three of his neighbours remark that they have seen him challenge at least as many as thirty people already;—a watch is set on him—and the mystery is at length revealed; he had *brought his OWN CHAMPAGNE!*—though how

he got it in, and how he managed it altogether, and where the dickens he stows it, nobody *can* divine.

The noise now increases. Bashful swains—some such there always *will* be, even at the best regulated festivals—who were once too modest to enter into conversation, now begin to quiz and declare their hidden opinions upon things in general. Ladies, who at the first stood upon their “gentility,” smiled courteously, but with dignified reserve, and if a vulgar deputy happened to wink his eye at the turtle, or rub his hands at the approach of a savoury dish, turned their heads awry—now begin to laugh loud, and ask questions of anybody and everybody. The gentleman with the private champagne takes wine with the folks all over again, and every one begins to say what he likes and ask for whatever he fancies. One specimen of modesty, who at first was satisfied with anything he could get, actually had the audacity to half lift a leveret out of a dish, and giving him a box of the ears, vented an abusive epithet and dismissed the poor inanimate object with savage contempt. Others preserved a calmness in their enjoyment; one contemplative character there was with his cuffs turned up, his napkin fastened through his coat button-hole, and one elbow resting in a Selim curry, sitting with his waistcoat half thrown open, and looking as much

as to say, "Mortal that I am, I can eat no more!" The private champagne gentleman, having (as he acknowledged to me) several bottles yet unopened, now could not contain himself, but he must take wine with all the stewards! He had conceived the idea, and he had made the resolve, and nothing seemed likely to dissuade him from his bent. He fixed his wild eyes upon one of those august functionaries, made several ineffectual attempts to bring him to a *tête-à-tête*, called him by his name, beckoned to him as he passed, and tried to catch hold of his wand,—but all to no purpose. At length he succeeded in laying hold of the official gentleman's coat-tail, and the more the steward resented the indignity, the more the champagne gentleman held him tight and wouldn't let him go. Finding himself thus enthralled, and that he had no alternative but to comply, he yielded to his fate and consented to exchange the civilities required; the potation was quaffed, and his tormentor released him—when he was in a moment lost amid the crowd, and never showed his face in the same vicinity again.

The choristers above now chant forth "Non Nobis Domine," and the company stand up to listen to it and look about them. What the effect of those "solemn sweeping concords" may have been upon

the sensibilities of the multitude present might be an interesting theme for speculation, but for which there is no time just now. They behaved very well upon the whole, and some of the worthy corporators put on their spectacles to look at the singers.

Now come the *pinés*. It would not be fitting to charge the citizens with sensuality, but they undoubtedly have (as an "honourable member" near me phrased it), *males and females of both sexes*, an extraordinary penchant for pinés. As the affrighted waiter pours them upon the table, they are seized with convulsive rapacity; "appetite grows by what it feeds on," and then calls for more; choruses of pretexts are raised for a fresh supply—all the last of course, were bad ones, or they hadn't had any at all. The steward is appealed to,—and one requisitionist, whose heart was in the cause, was seen to endeavour to propitiate that dignity by offering him an apple as a bribe. The latter seemed anxious to excuse himself and set himself right with the disappointed gentleman, whom he knew and esteemed, by entering confidentially with him into a full and statistical explanation as to how *very* delicately he was circumstanced as regarded the pinés, for that he as well as his fellow-stewards had had so many at his disposal and no more—that they really had been

equally, and he believed equitably, distributed ; and that, if it came to that, he was not in a situation to ask public favours of the committee, or private ones of the members of it—and, finally, that if there was any one thing more than another that the committee were particular about, it *was* the pines ; it would have delighted him to have served so old a friend, but so it was—and the apple he begged to decline. Then there were sundry laughs against the poor gentleman ; one told him not to pine away, another that it was a fruitless attempt, and another that he thought he had better cut the pines altogether.

And thus they went on, “*ab ovo usque ad mala*,” from the baron to the pines, until at last the trumpeters, who had been standing three abreast at each end of the hall, maintaining an inflexible silence, but looking as though they were quite prepared to make a noise when properly called upon to do so, on a signal being given by Mr. Toole, the toastmaster, blew a blast which reverberated through the great hall ; and then Mr. Toole the toastmaster gave out, in his most (some one said) *senatorian* accents, and in language which the youngest of the Lord Mayor's children in the gallery might understand, that the Lord Mayor was about to drink from the loving cup to the health of the citizens, and that he bade them

all a hearty welcome! Whereupon the welcome is acknowledged by the company, not in words, but in deeds, and they fall to the carousal again as if nothing had happened, and they were only just beginning. Trumpets again — Mr. Toole again — and the fact is, through those infallible media, promulgated, that the health of her Majesty the Queen is proposed. It is drunk with enthusiasm. The citizens now begin to feel political. Sir Robert Peel is called up, and delivers a speech replete with proprieties and matchless elocution. Toole, it was thought, looked a little jealous at him, until the minister moderated the vehemence of his tones in order to play off a pleasantry upon the Corporation touching the question of provisions under the new tariff, at which Toole, and, indeed, everybody in the hall excepting the men in armour and the overgrown boguies at the western end, “laughed consumedly.” Mendacious young men leave their seats, and try to work their way up the hall. They take a favourable standing position for hearing what is going on, but their tenure is a short one, and they are driven away by loud hints about irregularity, smothered complaints that the view is obstructed, and, in the last resort, pathetic appeals to their feelings as gentlemen, utterly irresistible. The discomfited expectants therefore take

refuge and array themselves in the aisle that crosses the hall, and await with impatience the withdrawal of the ladies, when *their* vacant places are to be disposable. Some of them flock round the little gate—

“ The ivory gate that leads behind the scenes —

at which one of the gayest-looking of the stewards is stationed, and invested with the painful duty of confronting the importunity of the applicants for admission on the hustings. The waiters are now about to retire, and, having done their office, to

“ Receive money for their pains ; ”

and each, as he passes the ivory gate, has to sustain the scrutinising glance of the steward, who, probably, knowing the heart of man, surveys him with Cassius-like severity, muttering troublously, as he escapes, something between a hope and a disbelief, that not one of them has been so detestably base as to defraud the Corporation of any of their pines.

The ladies retire and a rush succeeds. The vacant seats are taken without ceremony, and in a few moments the appearance of the tables, as far at least as the company is concerned, is singularly changed. Admirals and tailors, orators and glaziers, ambassadors and pawnbrokers, are now huddled cheek by

jowl together ; no man knows his neighbour, and, therefore, all confidence being at an end, each is satisfied with observing the proceedings and the aspect of the company around him. The Lord Mayor, of course, was the chief attraction—and who could fail in identifying *him*, with his rubicund face and portly presence, betokening the life and soul of magisterial hospitality? Mr. Hopkins, indeed, is the *beau-idéal* of a Lord Mayor, the very glass of corpulency, and the mould of civic grace. Unabashed by the aristocracy of his courtier guests, and unrestrained by any affected sense of his own unworthiness, “open to all parties, and influenced by none,” he acquitted himself with a felicity which has rarely, if ever, been equalled. On his right hand sat, first, the late Lord Mayor, in appearance the very antithesis of his bluff and benign-looking successor ; then the ministers, apparently engaged in thought and careless observation ; and then the aldermen, who, having said all their good things to the foreign ambassadors who did not understand them, and exhausted all their arts in attempting to revive the sensation created hours ago by their first appearance among the constables in the lobby, were seated with a restlessness and oppressed look of resignation not altogether characteristic of their order. A line of

judges graced the left-hand table, and beyond them a file of military officers, who seemed to enjoy their claret, and were not disposed to quarrel about the pines. In course of time the "exclusives" became reconciled to their new neighbours, and starch decorum gave place to sociability and noise. Then was it found that the Bacchanalian influences had not been confined to the humbler circles,—for there was Sir Jeremy Lawson (an exception to the general aspect of his brethren) making ten people laugh at once; and Mr. Harper cracking nuts and jokes alternately with a small party of pundits; and the police commissioner, for the amusement of the bigwigs, torturing a fine-looking man with a disquisition which, from the perplexed look of the latter, probably was too abstruse or too refined for his comprehension; there was one of the Sheriffs telling the drollest anecdotes of his early career—and the other quoting epigrams from the Charivari; and here and there might be seen strange fantastic figures, bedizened with all the elaboration of a gala dandy—one laying down the law in bad English to a subaltern; another trying to feel at home with a *savant*; and a third, with a look like an excited spectre, and one leg hanging over the side of his chair, appeared to be chuckling at some

“ bodiless creation ” in the third heavens, upon which his eyes were fixed with feverish ecstasy.

The speeches proceeded ; and Lord John Russell, who sat below the judges, returned thanks for the city members, and was vociferously cheered by his admirers. The Lord Chief Justice, who looked, as usual, handsome and irritable, returned thanks for *his* health in a neat and short speech, while the Recorder, an officer of the Corporation, on the contrary, thought proper to say a very great deal, and to feel strongly on the occasion. Sir Frederick Pollock spoke and looked as an Attorney-General ought to speak and look ; and the late Lord Mayor, in returning thanks for the health of the late Lady Mayoress, said that it ill became a man to praise his own wife — she was a Peri, and that was all he should say for her.

The Lord Mayor rises, and the company follow him to the Council chamber. A new era commences. If the mixture of grades was great after the disappearance of the ladies from the dinner-table, what was it *now*, when the citizens were no longer obliged, like good boys, to sit quiet in their places, but were at liberty to lounge about at will, and seek out every imaginable object of admiration ? There were all

the ladies, seated like legislators on the public benches—and oh! the humour and the unction with which the worthy members of the court criticised and saluted, and otherwise deported themselves before the fair senators in *uncommon* council assembled! What imaginations were rife with the conception of the indescribable and electrifying effects that would be produced if the ladies were to have a public debate, and start a discussion upon the income-tax in the presence of its illustrious author! Due it is to the Lord Mayor here to state, that, foreseeing the inconvenience, though perfectly alive to the humour of such an exhibition, he wisely abstained from giving any encouragement to such a proceeding, and with that view denied himself the gratification of sending a card of invitation to his particular friend Miss Mary Anne Walker. And so with very good taste, in place of politics, the Lady Mayoress proposed a quadrille, and the Lord Mayor, smoothing his warm face (for the heat was oppressive) with a white cambric, said he had no objection. The multitude increases, and the Council chamber is now filled (emblematically enough) almost to bursting. Nevertheless a quadrille they will have. The select few who happen to be so peculiarly constituted as to wear cloaks in the dog-days, or practise gymnastics in

a hot-house, now stand up. Being curious to have a sight of the individuals who, in the absence of anything in the shape of ventilation, could face the ordeal through such an atmosphere, I advanced to the centre of the room, and found that the Terpsichorean fatuity was not confined to the juveniles alone, for, as if to confound the evidence of my senses, who should I behold figuring in *L'Eté* but the venerable city solicitor; and upon penetrating farther through the hot fog which enveloped the mystic maze, my bewildered vision was met by the imposing aspect of Mr. John Martineau, whisking through the *Pastorale*! It is not said disrespectfully, but the revered member of "the House" does *not* do the *Pastorale* well. The young ladies are now on the tip-toe of expectation that some one of the distinguished foreigners or natives will come and supplicate the honour of their hands; and Mr. Deputy Daffodil's son—with a deal of embroidery for his years, glazed boots as tight as ever he can bear them, and all with a three-and-sixpenny pair of gloves, and an opera hat!—makes sundry vain strides after the object of his affections, but she is invariably snapped up by an Excellency or a member of Parliament before Mr. Deputy's son can say Jack Robinson; and then when she is really disengaged,

coolly tells him that her aunt Isabella (or "aunt Wasabella") won't allow her to dance any more.

The true spirit of hilarity is now in the ascendant. The aldermen get more lively—the flow of soul is now succeeding to the feast, and the vital fluid runs

“ Tickling up and down men's veins,
Making that idiot laughter move their eyes,
And stir their cheeks to idle merriment.”

Some one said he declared he saw Lord Stanley poke Lord John in the ribs; and Sir Robert Peel, as he sipped his coffee, *would* keep making the Lord Mayor split his sides over again with his facetiæ about duties and provisions. The judges looked jolly, and bantered one another as they use to do of yore at those daily dinners where one bottle served for a mess of four, and they thought judges in their wigs looked very much like faguies. The *militaires* relaxed their conventional rigidity, and moved about with *civil* ease. There was Mr. Joseph Hume trying to explain a conundrum with his fingers to Mr. Horne Horne, who would keep talking and laughing about the *Times* Testimonial. Whist-players who *do* love a rubber better than anything else in this world next to their relations, sport a *jeu d'esprit* upon every picture-card, and hum vivacious cadences

between the deals. Quondam members of the Corporation, who had not been among their old compeers for many a day, are recognised and greeted with vociferous delight. Some there were of a more serious cast, looking like wiseacres, and speaking their minds (*in vino veritas*) to their bitterest enemies. Candidates for livings, lectureships, master-ships, pleaderships, and commissionerships, were making the most of their opportunity, and throwing themselves continually in the way of their expected patrons. Shopkeepers were seen playing the bashaw, carpenters parading about with swords, and hosiers with black-silk stockings for all the world like Hamlet Prince of Denmark.

A small clique of stedfast whigs hold a little facetious council in a corner, and vent innumerable sarcasms in an under-tone, touching the demeanour of Lord John, and the indications manifested of late tending to prove the hollowness of that statesman's political professions. Some avowed that their faith in him was gone, and gloried in not having sat near him at dinner, and thereby been compelled to take wine with his lordship. The loudest of the confederates, it appears, had been accommodated at dinner at the lower end of the hall, from whence, as Lord John must from physical causes have been

almost invisible, the angry gentleman, not having brought an opera glass, must have enjoyed the additional privilege of not being annoyed even with a sight of the noble offender. Sharp discussions would spring up on all sides about the sliding scale and the new alderman, and Cabool and the Tower ditch, and the political purity and worthiness or otherwise of one and all, severally and collectively, of the very admirable or very abominable of the individuals present, who, exercising the superior energies bestowed upon them by nature, had, in the regular course of things, raised themselves above the herd, and invoked the malignity of cackling critics by rendering public service to their fellow-creatures.

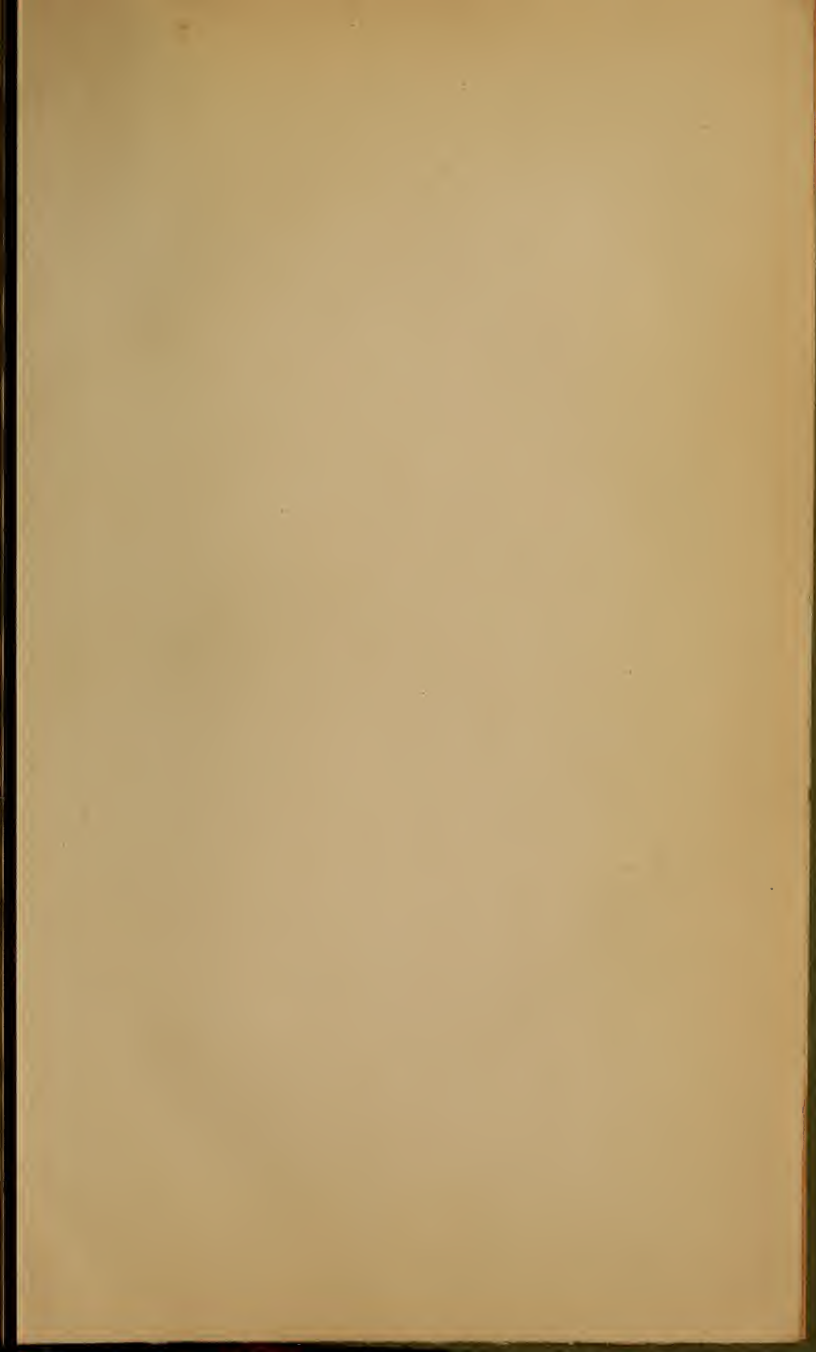
Sympathetic worthies, with ferret eyes, who seemed to love everything with lachrymose affection, toddled about, dispensing their benedictions, and weeping tears almost of blood, as if their very heart had burst with philanthropy and joy.

One furious gentleman, looking very much like a genius, darted into the tea-room, flashing and foaming with ire. He had been insulted!—grossly insulted!—no words could describe his wrath—no vengeance could appease it. It appeared, from the agitated gentleman's own account of himself, that he was devoted to the arts, and had thought fit, during

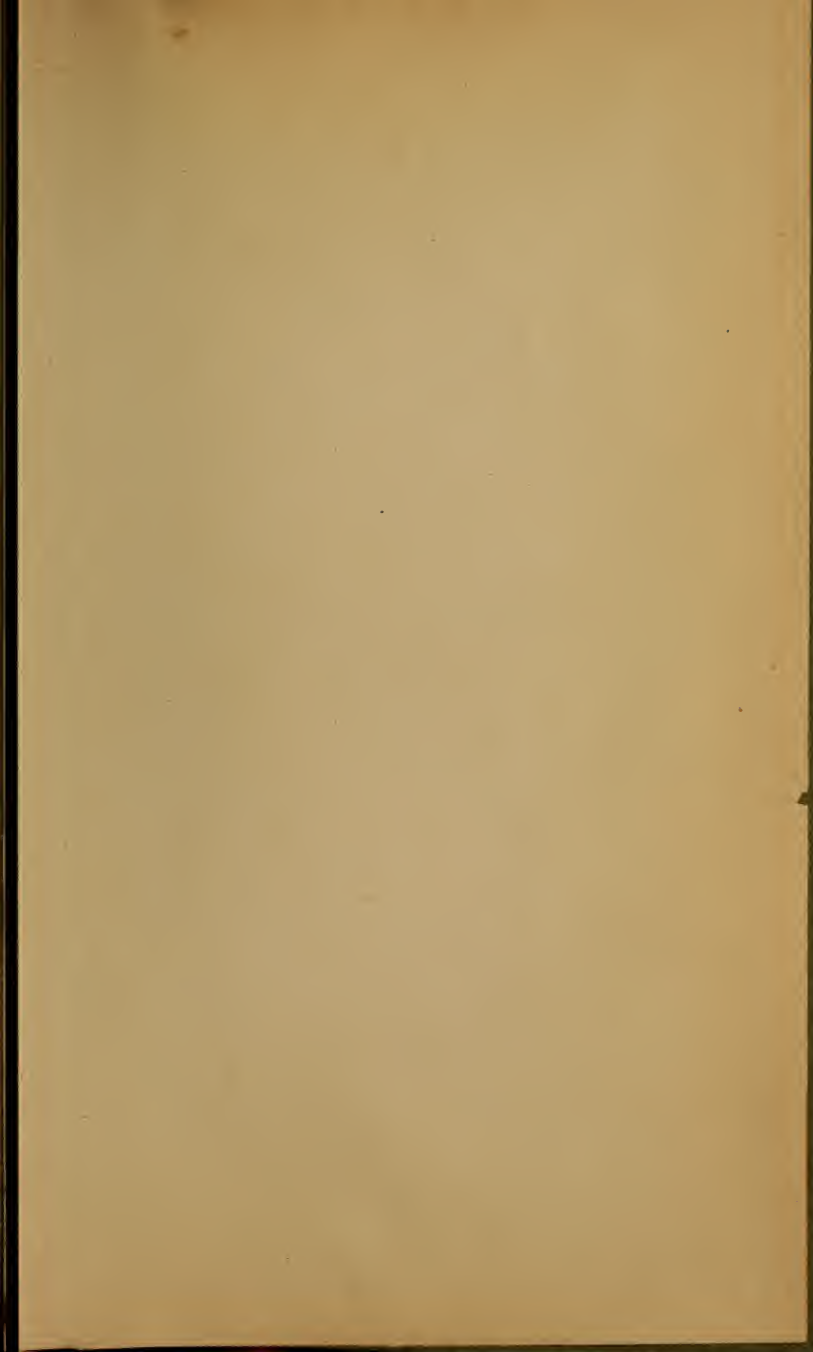
dinner, to express his admiration of some piece of mural ornament on which the figure of a horse was sculptured, in the hall. His neighbour, to whom he had addressed himself, opined that the said horse was *bad about the knees*; this the dilettante denied; whereupon, without giving him any notice, the dissident, in the complainant's own language, "up'd with his hand and rubbed my countenance, and said, 'what do you know about horses?'" Fortunately, it was the Lord Mayor's dinner;—if it had not been, he must—yes, he *must* have struck him; but under the peculiar circumstances, he contented himself with taking the individual's likeness, in order that he might be able to identify him on some future opportunity, and in the meantime he peremptorily denied that the gentleman was a *gentleman*. This was a climax. There could be nothing worth staying for after this. In seeking the room where I had deposited my cloak, I mistook the apartment, and entered an adjoining one, in which some livery servants were pledging each other in copious libations. The under waiters were assembled round a fire, calumniating the waiters with the red collars; while the latter fraternity, as one man, protested with a ferocity positively fearful against the monopoly so long held by Mr. Toole the toastmaster, one of them insinuating un-

worthy suspicions as to the real cause of that eminent functionary's face being so very red, and another (with wool in his ears) going so far as to assert that Mr. Toole had seen his best day, and that his voice, at all events, had not improved *no more nor his complexion*.

Passing through the hall again on my way out, I recognised two or three of my dining acquaintances, and amongst them the private champagne gentleman, with a bottle in one hand, a glass in the other, a lady in each eye, and his soul in elysium. I felt somewhat inclined to loiter awhile with this indefatigable wassailer, and observe the antics of an original mind in its undress, or, to speak more technically, *under disguise*—but “night’s wheels were rattling onward,”—and I took my departure, infinitely gratified with my entertainment at THE LORD MAYOR’S DINNER.









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